

# WILD WEST



A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

*Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Application made for Second Class Entry at the N. Y. Post Office.*

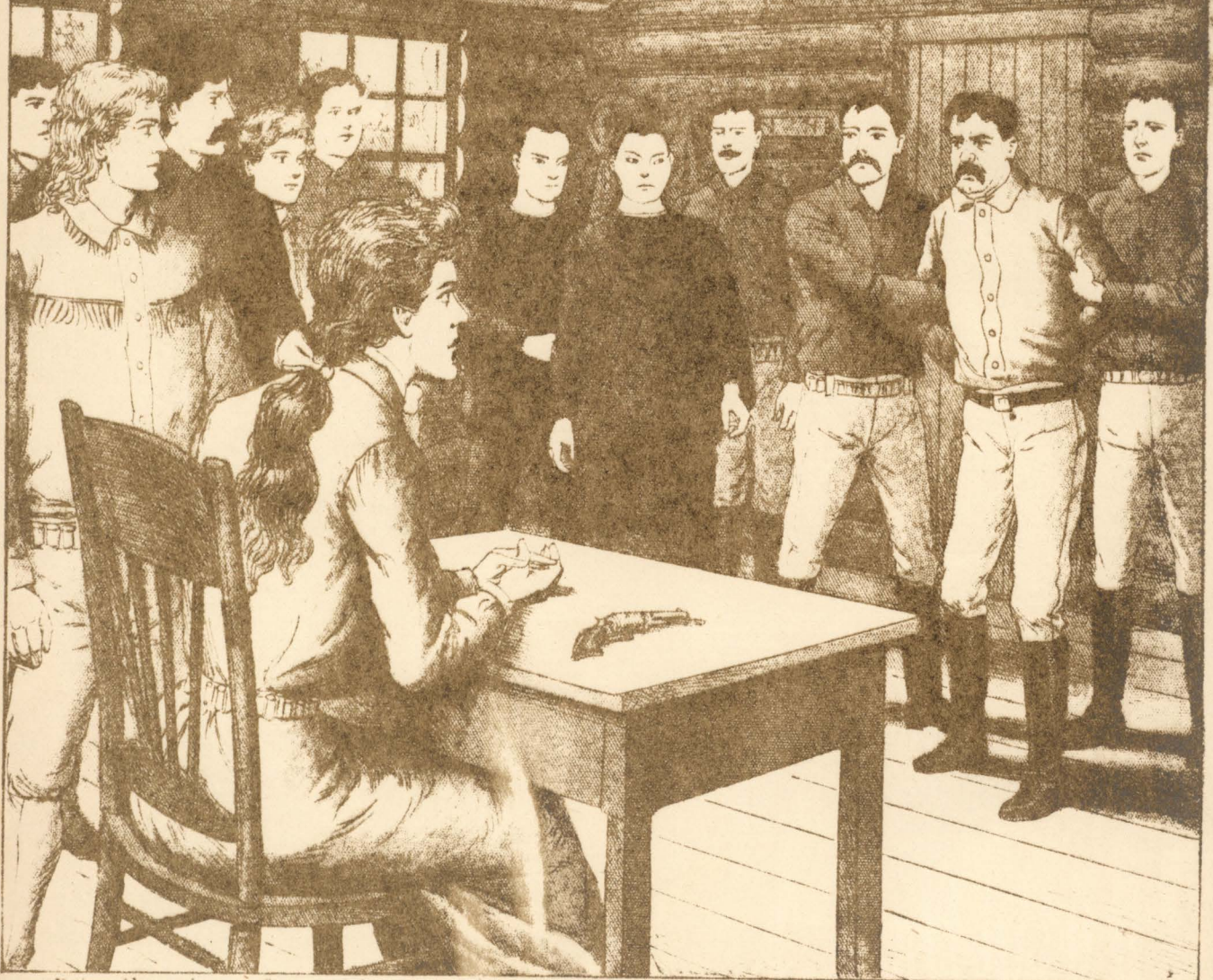
No. 184.

NEW YORK, APRIL 27, 1906.

Price 5 Cents.

## YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE OREGON OUTLAWS; OR, ARIETTA AS A "JUDGE."

*By AN OLD SCOUT.*



"Bring the prisoner forward," said Arietta. The Oregon outlaw was promptly forced up to the table.  
"The sentence of the court is that you have got just twenty minutes to leave the camp!" came from the lips of the fair "judge."

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## YOUNG WILD WEST AND THE OREGON OUTLAWS

OR,

### Arietta as a "Judge."

BY AN OLD SCOUT.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### YOUNG WILD WEST MEETS THE OREGON OUTLAWS.

Crack! crack!

"Hip hi! Lookie out! Me no likee; hi-hi!"

Two sharp reports rang out, followed instantly by the cries of a frightened Chinaman, and then came a crashing through the bushes that plainly told that someone was trying hard to get away from an impending danger.

The next moment the person who had uttered the cries got clear of the bushes and emerged into a little clearing on the mountain side, running with the speed of the wind.

It was a typical Chinaman, as the words uttered by him would imply. And no wonder he was frightened, for behind him was a big black bear in hot pursuit.

The blood was streaming from a wound in the bear's neck, showing that at least one of the shots had taken effect, but had simply angered the bear.

The Chinaman held a big revolver in his hand, and it was from this the shots had been fired.

Once clear of the bushes the bear began to gain rapidly on the Celestial, and when he looked over his shoulder and saw that the ferocious animal was less than a dozen feet behind him the Chinaman let out another yell.

"Help! Help!" he shouted. "Miser Wild! Come shootee um bear velly quicke, or Hop Wah be killee!"

Then he fired again.

But bullets from a revolver would not stop the rush of a bear of that kind.

A rifle might if the bullet landed behind the left fore-shoulder or into one of the eyes.

The Chinaman had just got across the clearing and was making for a tree when the bear caught up with him and made a strike with its paw.

The blow missed by about an inch, and then——  
Cran-ang!

The report of a rifle sounded and the bear pitched forward, fell to the ground and rolled over and lay quivering in the throes of death.

"What's the matter, Hop?" said a voice a few yards away and then a dashing looking young fellow attired in a fancy hunting suit of buckskin, with a mass of long chestnut hair hanging over his shoulders, appeared on the scene.

He held a Winchester rifle in his hand, from the muzzle of which the smoke was curling, and a smile was upon his handsome, boyish face.

"Oh, Miser Wild!" cried the Celestial, joyfully; "me t'inkee me gone dead velly muchee. You comee 'long allee samee in light timee."

"Well, I guess I did. What were you doing so far away from the camp, anyhow?"

"Me jest takee lilee walkee."

The boy looked at him suspiciously and then started for the bushes he had burst from, followed by the bear.

In less than a minute he picked up an empty whiskey flask.

"Hop," said he, "you certainly came far enough away from the camp to drink the whiskey you had. I almost wish I had let the bear get you now."

The Chinaman grinned in a childish way.

"Me no dlink tanglefoot," he answered, shaking his head; "me bling um bottle here to thlow 'way, so my blother no gittee."

"I wouldn't believe you under any condition, Hop. Now, you just get at that bear and cut the haunches from it. I'll send Charlie here to help you."

With that the handsome, dashing young fellow turned

and walked through the bushes until he came to a trail a few yards away.

Right here we will say that the boy was Young Wild West, the Champion Deadshot of the West, mine owner, rancher and all around Westerner.

He was called by many of those who knew him the Prince of the Saddle because he had never met his match in daring and graceful feats of horsemanship.

Of all the heroes of the Wild West, Young Wild West surely was the one most admired.

He was always in search of adventure and courting danger, but it was for the purpose of doing good and helping along his fellow beings who had not the skill, tact and courage to help themselves.

At the time of which we are writing the northern part of Nevada, near the boundary line of Oregon, was a vast wilderness filled with all sorts of wild beasts and haunted with lawless bands of white men and Indians.

There were trails running through the wild country, over which those on their way to the gold and silver mines traveled from the cities and towns near the Pacific Coast, and it was upon these trails that the outlaw bands got in their work.

Young Wild West, with his two faithful partners, Jim Dart and Cheyenne Charlie, Cheyenne Charlie's wife, Anna, the Misses Arietta Murdock and Eloise Gardner, who were the sweethearts of the dashing young hero and Jim Dart, were on their way to Disaster Peak.

They brought with them two Chinamen, who were brothers bearing the names of Hop Wah and Wing Wah, as their servants.

The girls, as Cheyenne Charlie's wife and Arietta and Eloise were always called by Young Wild West and his partners, were well used to traveling horseback and camping out in the wilds of the mountains and plains of the West.

They all knew how to handle firearms, especially Arietta, who was an apt pupil of her dashing young lover, Young Wild West.

She could hold her own at any time, and in any kind of a scrimmage where coolness and straight shooting was necessary.

The camp where the friends of our hero were was only about two hundred yards from the spot where Hop Wah had come upon the bear, while engaged in emptying the contents of the flask he had taken there in order to get out of sight of the rest.

As Young Wild West turned from the trail and walked into the camp his friends looked at him expectantly.

"What was ther trouble, Wild?" asked a tall man of thirty, with long black hair and flowing mustache.

This was Cheyenne Charlie, the famous scout and Indian fighter, who had served several years in the employ of the government before becoming a partner of Young Wild West.

"Oh, Hop sneaked off with a flask of whisky to have a quiet spree, and a big black bear ran across him, that's

all," was the reply. "You may as well go back there and get the haunches off and bring them in. You like bear meat."

"I reckon I do."

The scout promptly started off, and then our hero related in a few words how he had come upon the Chinaman and bear just in time to save the life of the former by shooting the latter.

"That ought to learn the yellow fool a lesson," observed Jim Dart, who was a boy of twenty, which was the same age as Wild. "Perhaps he will give up drinking whisky for a while now."

"He will give up drinking whisky when he is no longer able to get it, Jim," was the reply. "He is like a red-skin; the more he gets of it, the better he likes it."

"My blother velly muchee baddee Chinee," ventured a meek looking celestial, who was busy arranging to get some supper ready, for it was getting toward sunset.

This was Wing Wah, who was head cook for the party.

"Yes, that is right," Jim Dart retorted; "there is no doubt about it. But I take notice that you like the stuff once in a while, too."

Wing had no more to say then.

"Well, Wild, I am glad that you got there in time to save Hop from being killed by the bear," spoke up Arietta Murdock, the charming golden-haired sweetheart of the dashing young deadshot. "Though he has several bad faults, he is a pretty faithful fellow, and he saved your life once, you know."

"Yes, Et, and that is why I tolerate his nonsense. Hop can always stay with us, if he wants to. He is amusing with his sleight-of-hand tricks, and he does his work well. There are worse Chinamen than he is."

Wing Wah looked up just then, so our hero continued:

"His brother is a pretty good sort of a fellow, too, I suppose. He is a first class cook and generally does as he is told."

That was all the Chinaman wanted.

He began humming a little song in his own language and worked away zealously.

As we have just said, Arietta was a blonde, and a very pretty one, at that.

Eloise was just the opposite, she being a brunette, while Anna was of a type that might be called half way between the two extremes.

They were three very pretty girls, though, and fitting companions for the dashing young deadshot and his partners.

The camping outfit they had with them was an admirable one, since it required two pack-horses to carry it.

The party had journeyed by rail to a town called Winne-mucca, and from there they had proceeded on horseback until we find them within but one day's journey of Disaster Peak.

It was a rather peculiar errand that they were on.

In Denver Young Wild West had come in contact with a man, who claimed that he was from Disaster Peak and

declared that were it not for the villainous outlaws that manifested that region the little town of Seven Spot, where he made his headquarters, would be an ideal spot for the development of silver and lead mining.

Wild had listened to the story the man told about it and he was satisfied that he was speaking the truth.

"I'll take a trip out that way some day and see what kind of a place you've got there," he said.

Not having any other place in view just then, and desiring to travel around in search of adventure—and fortune, too, he decided to pay a visit to Disaster Peak and see what it looked like.

The girls wanted to go, so they were allowed to have their own way.

So far our friends had met with very few adventures, and these of a minor sort.

Hunting was good, and since they had left the railroad they had shot an abundance of game.

But there was too much sameness about this to suit dashing Young Wild West and his partners.

The forests of northern Nevada were just like any other forests, to them, and they were beginning to wonder why it was that they had not come across any of the outlaws, who were said to be so plentiful in that region.

Pretty soon Cheyenne Charlie and Hop Wah came in with what meat they wanted from the carcass of the slain bear, and then Wing Wah said supper was ready.

The scout and Jim Dart were attired in buckskin suits similar to Young Wild West, and all three wore broad sombreros of the Stetson type.

The girls had on fancy riding costumes consisting of buckskin skirts and leggings and waists and cloaks of bright colored material, setting them off to the very best advantage.

It was what might be termed a very "happy family" that sat down to the evening meal just as the sun was sinking below the range, and as the meal was a well cooked one, they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Though the weather was still a bit cool, it being the early part of April, none of them minded it.

Hop Wah assisted his brother in his duties without a word to say.

He knew that Wild had told how the bear had come upon him while he was drinking the whisky, and he felt that the less he said about it the better it would be for him.

Wing must have noticed that his brother felt rather sheepish, for he looked at him now and then and grinned.

Cheyenne Charlie was thinking of starting a row between the two when something happened that caused him to change his mind.

The clatter of hoofs suddenly sounded near at hand, and then a horseman dashed up and came to a halt before them.

The rider was a striking looking personage attired in the garb a mining sport or Western gambler usually wears, while the black horse he rode was decked with fancy and expensive trappings.

"Good evening, strangers!" he called out, politely, taking off his hat to the girls. "This is quite a surprise! I had no idea of meeting such dashing looking gentlemen and beautiful ladies in this wild place. Where are you bound, if I may be so bold as to ask?"

"We are bound for a town called Seven Spot," answered Young Wild West, who, though he did not like the looks and manner of the man, decided to answer him civilly.

"Ah! And what are you taking such beautiful ladies to Seven Spot for? Or, is it a traveling show that you have?"

"No, it isn't a traveling show," retorted Wild, noticing that the stranger was trying to be a bit sarcastic. "We are simply going to Seven Spot to see what sort of a place it is. We have a friend living there, and I told him that we would take a trip out there some time. Do you know anything about Seven Spot?"

"Well, rather. It is right near the border line of Oregon and is a sort of headquarters for the villains of both states, it seems."

"Is that so? Well, I guess we are not afraid of the villains there. We always have a way of minding our own affairs, and when we do that we are never bothered, unless it is by someone who wants to rob us."

"Have you ever been robbed, then?" queried the stranger, smiling and showing much interest.

"Never been robbed of anything that we did not get back with interest, and that pretty quick, too."

"Ah! There is something remarkable about your party, then. I am glad I met you. My name is Doc Dean and I live in Oregon, just over the line from Seven Spot. I guess I had better introduce you to the Oregon Outlaws!"

The last was said in a louder tone of voice, and then from the grove of cedars just behind him there came ten horsemen, each having a six-shooter in his hand.

Young Wild West knew what was up right away.

They had met the outlaws they were looking for!

There was no look of surprise on Young Wild West's face; he was far too cool for that.

But the very moment the horsemen came from the grove he jerked a revolver from his belt and leveled it at the man who called himself Doc Dean.

"Just tell your friends to get away from here, or you'll drop from your horse!" he exclaimed in a ringing voice. "I mean what I say!"

If Young Wild West had not shown surprise Doc Dean certainly did.

A look of blank amazement came over his face, and then in a faltering voice he said:

"Move back to the trail, boys, and wait for further orders."

The horsemen turned immediately, showing that they were well disciplined.

Some of them acted as though they would like to open fire on our friends, though, but they had sense enough to realize that if they did their leader would surely fall.

Not only had Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart drawn

their revolvers by this time, but the girls showed that they were ready to put up a fight, as well.

Doc Dean started to turn his horse around and follow his men, but Young Wild West commanded him to stay right where he was.

"You wait until I tell you to go or you'll never leave this place alive!" he said, calmly.

## CHAPTER II.

### WILD FOOLS THE OUTLAWS.

There was a glitter in the eyes of Doc Dean which told that though he knew he must obey, he was but waiting for a chance to turn the tables.

He was remarkably calm now, too.

"If you don't object to telling me, I would like to know who you are," he said.

"I don't object in the least. I am Young Wild West, and I came out this way to hunt up some of the outlaws that are out here, making life miserable for the few honest people who are trying to earn a livelihood," was the reply. "I want to warn them to behave and disband."

"Oh! Well, you have been lucky enough to meet the boss of them all, then. I am Doc Dean, the leader of the Oregon Outlaws! My gang can't be downed, so you had better give up the foolish notion you have got in your head."

"I guess you never heard of me, or you would not say that."

"Oh, yes! I have heard of Young Wild West," was the retort.

"Well, you never heard of him giving up anything he started to accomplish, did you?"

"I can't say that I have heard that. I never heard much about him, anyway. I always thought I would like to meet him, though, and I am glad that I have."

"Well, if you don't look out you will wish you never had," spoke Arietta, who stood with her rifle, ready to fire upon the men if they took a notion to come back.

"Ah! I like to hear you say that!" exclaimed the Oregon Outlaw. "There is music in your voice, my pretty one. I will confess right here that I have been smitten by your beauty!"

"You'll be smitten by a chunk of hot lead if yer don't keep yer mouth shut!" observed Cheyenne Charlie.

"Oh, no! I don't believe that Young Wild West is one who would allow a man to be shot down when he is virtually a prisoner in his power."

"No, I wouldn't allow that," said Wild. "Now you just turn your horse around and light out! The next time we meet look out for me! You are not going to rob us, and you can bet all you're worth on it!"

"Good evening, all!" cried the villain, sarcastically, and

then he turned and galloped into the grove of cedars, where his men had gone.

"Now I guess we have got to look out!" said Young Wild West. "I feel sure that we will not get rid of that gang as easy as all that. They were rather surprised, I think, for they surely thought they had us dead to rights, and meant to clear us out of everything we had of value. It is a good thing that there are so many boulders and rocks scattered around here, for we will have something to shield us in case they do attack us."

The place they had selected to pitch their camp certainly was well adapted to withstand an attack.

Back of them about twenty feet was a little hollow at the foot of a cliff, and it was here that the horses were tied so they could nibble at the short grass.

All around the campfire were rocks and boulders amply large enough to crouch behind.

A word from Wild and they all took positions so they would not be in danger of being shot from the grove.

But there was nothing to indicate that the Oregon Outlaws were coming back right away.

It was beginning to get dark now and the air was taking on a chill that made them wish that the fire was nearer to them.

Wild saw that there was a good place in the hollow to have a fire, and that they would get more benefit from there than where it now was, providing they were forced to keep out of the way of the outlaws.

"Boys," said he, "let's roll some of the rocks across the opening here, and then get the fire going over this way. The tents are all right where they are, for they are shielded pretty well by that little ridge there."

"Good enough!" spoke up the scout, and then all hands set at work getting things in shape.

When the stones had been rolled and piled up to suit them some of the brands from the fire were brought down in the hollow and then another campfire was soon blazing away, for there was plenty of dry wood there.

"I never thought we were going to run across such a gang as that before we got to Seven Spot," observed our hero, as he took a look around into the gathering gloom and saw nothing out of the ordinary. "I did think, though, that we would strike some of the outlaws when we got there, for the man from Disaster Peak declared that a person never knew just when he was safe in the little town."

"What was that galoot's name, Wild?" asked the scout.

"Dutton was the name he went by, I believe. But I am certain that he was not putting it too strong when he said it was a dangerous place for an honest man to live. That's why I was anxious to make the trip out here."

"Did he say anything about the outlaws belonging ter Oregon?"

"Yes, he said they came from both states, and that you could never tell when you were in the presence of some of them."

"Well, I reckon we told all right a little while ago,"

chuckled Charlie. "It didn't take much ter tell that they was an outlaw gang all right, even if ther galoot what call-himself Doc Dean hadn't said they was."

"They thought they had us dead to rights, and that they could relieve us of what money we had and insult the girls as they saw fit," said Wild. "But they soon found out their mistake. If that fellow had not ordered them to leave just as he did I would have shot him dead. There is no harm in shooting a road agent, when he persists in attacking you."

"Do you think they really went very far away, Wild?" asked Arietta.

"No the chances are that they are pretty close to us at this minute. I am going to find out pretty soon. I want it to get good and dark first."

Wild waited a few minutes, and then buckling his belt a hole tighter, he drew a revolver from the holster at his right side and set out to find out whether the outlaws were anywhere close about.

He did not head straight for the cedar grove in which they had disappeared, but went around to the right.

There was an excellent chance for him to succeed without being seen by anyone who might be watching, for the rocks and boulders were numerous and the evergreen shrubbery that lined the side of the mountains afforded an excellent shield for the daring boy.

Wild continued on his way until he entered the grove at a point a hundred yards to the right from the place where the Oregon Outlaws had last been seen.

All was still except the chirping of insects and the weird hoot of an owl that was located in a dead tree not far away.

The dashing young deadshot now continued straight ahead and soon reached the trail that led to Seven Spot, which lay on a level spot directly in the north shadow of Disaster Peak.

Once on the trail the boy paused and took a look around.

To the left along the edge of the trail something like two hundred yards away he saw the faint glimmer of a campfire.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, with a nod of satisfaction, "so here's where you are, eh? Well, I had an idea you didn't go very far, Doc Dean. I guess your intentions are to surprise us before morning. We'll see about that."

Wild now started for the campfire, which, he could easily tell, was partly hidden from view.

He took to the opposite side of the trail and made his way along cautiously through the bushes.

He was not long in getting to a point from which he had a pretty good view of the camp.

The outlaws were sitting and standing about a big fire of logs and were evidently bent upon staying there all night, as some had put up blankets in the form of tents.

Wild thought he might as well get close enough to hear what the conversation was, so he moved a little nearer.

Not until he was within twenty yards of the edge of the camp did he pause.

Then he listened and heard what was being said.

It was the leader of the outlaw band who appeared to be talking at that moment.

"Never mind, boys," Wild heard him say. "It is quite certain that Young Wild West and his crowd have got some money with them to carry them through. It may be that the boy intends to buy some mining property there, for I have heard that he goes around buying mines that are for sale cheap, and that he has a way of making them pay in double-quick time. A fellow told me that Young Wild West was one of the luckiest that ever put a pick in the ground."

"Of course they've got money with 'em, Doc," one of the others said. "What would they be goin' around like this fur if they didn't have?"

"Well, if they haven't got much money there's a very pretty girl there, and I have made up my mind to have her, no matter what happens!" exclaimed Doc Dean.

"You have, eh?" thought Wild. "Look out that you don't get shot by that same pretty girl!"

"I reckon they think we have gone on," spoke up another of the outlaw gang. "But they'll find out that they've made a big mistake afore mornin'. It's time Wock got back ter let us know what they're up to over there. They might have took a notion to move off in some other direction."

"I hope they have," replied Doc. "That will make them very easy to catch. From what I saw of their camp, they ought to be able to put up a stiff fight where they are. If it wasn't for hurting the girls we could rush them and finish them in quick time. I have made up my mind that it will not be healthy to have Young Wild West and his partners around this part of the country. The boy has the reputation of cleaning out just such gangs as ours, and though I am not afraid that he will put us out of business, he might give us a lot of trouble."

"Well, he sorter got ther drop on you, Doc, an' made you order us ter quit ther game," observed a man, who was walking up and down as a sentry.

"Yes, and I feel sore over that, boys. Only once in my life before did anything like that happen to me. It was about a year ago, when I was doing business away up on the trail to Portland. I had three men with me, and we held up a stagecoach. The driver got the drop on me before I knew it, and he had me so bad that I had to do as he said and order my men to take to the woods. But I got him the next day, though. I was masked when he got the drop on me, and the next day I met him in a gin-mill in a little town and got in a quarrel with him. I was quicker than he was that day and the first shot fetched him. They wanted to lynch me at first, but I made them think that it was all the man's fault, and so got away from him. I am going to do the same thing with Young Wild West. No matter what happens to-night, unless he should go under, I'll meet him to-morrow in Seven Spot. He won't know me, and you can bet that he'll go under."

A smile stole over the face of Young Wild West as he heard this from his place of concealment.

"I guess you will have to be a great deal quicker than you were to-night, then, Doc Dean," he muttered.

Just then a man came into the camp from the dark shadows behind it and then all the outlaws waited to hear what he had to say.

"They're there yet," said the newcomer; "they've got things fixed as though they expect we'll be back after 'em. I reckon it'll be a putty hard fight afore we git ther best of 'em, 'cause they'll be able ter shoot from behind ther rocks they've got piled up. They've shifted their fire down in a little holler at ther foot of ther cliff."

"Is that so, Wock?" Doc Dean asked, showing that he was just the least bit troubled over the man's report. "Well, we will have a try at them and then make a rush to get behind the rocks, where they are. We must have what money they have got, and I want that girl with the golden hair!"

Wild did not wait much longer—only until he was sure that the villains did not mean to attack them until just before daylight.

Then he made his way back to the camp.

"Get ready to move at once," he said. "I guess the horses are not so tired but that we can make Seven Spot by daylight."

Then he quickly told them what he had learned.

Our friends were not long in getting ready to leave the spot.

And when they did leave they took a circle far enough around to prevent the outlaws from hearing them.

Doc Dean's scheme was not going to work.

### CHAPTER III.

#### OUR FRIENDS REACH SEVEN SPOT.

Our friends reached the trail that led into Seven Spot in less than twenty minutes after they broke camp and set out.

Wild was satisfied that the outlaws were entirely ignorant of the fact that they were going, to, so that gave him a feeling of satisfaction, since he knew they would be in a rage when they sneaked up to the hollow under the cliff and found it empty.

Once upon the trail the traveling was comparatively easy.

Where other horses had gone those of our friends could go; and the animals seemed to know it, for they went ahead with considerable more freedom.

Young Wild West was not, by any means, afraid of having a scrimmage with the Oregon Outlaws.

But he did not think it wise to remain where they were, when there was a chance for them to outwit the villains.

Then he would start in and show them what he could do in the line of hunting down outlaw gangs.

About midnight the moon came up, and then they had

a pretty clear path, for they could see for a good distance ahead in the parts where there were no woods

Young Wild West was satisfied, according to the reports he had received the day before, that they only had a trifle over sixty miles further to go when they went into camp that afternoon.

This distance could be easily made, even if the pack-horses were rather slow.

Resting now and then, they pushed on, and about an hour before daylight the lights of a little town showed in the distance.

"That must be Seven Spot," said our hero, as he came to a halt and sat on the back of his handsome sorrel stallion, Spitfire, and took in the scene ahead.

"As sure's you're alive it is, Wild!" exclaimed Charlie. "There ain't no other camp around this part of the country, I reckon."

There were only half a dozen lights to be seen, and these were almost in a cluster.

This showed that they must come from the drinking and gambling places of the town, and that the rest of the houses or shanties were wrapped in darkness.

They were nearly two miles off when they first saw the lights, and after they had pushed forward for a few minutes the trail wound its way around at the foot of a long, uneven cliff and they were lost to view.

It was not until they were right at the edge of the town that they caught sight of it again.

They rode through a crooked pass and came right upon it.

Disaster Peak reared itself dismal and bleak looking above the speck of civilization that lay beneath it.

The moon had gone down long before, so Wild halted and lighted a match, so he could see the time by his watch,

"We're a little early to strike breakfast at the tavern, if there is one there, and rather late to go to bed," he said with a laugh.

"Well, what do you say if we pick out an open space along the creek over there and go into camp?" Jim Dart suggested.

"I guess that is as good a way as any. Come on; we'll take that spot between the two shanties over there."

The spot having been selected, they promptly rode over to it and dismounted.

The two Chinamen were very sleepy, but they got a stir on them and assisted in putting up the tents they carried with them.

This done the girls took possession of their tent and the Celestials crawled into the other.

Wild, Charlie and Jim decided that they might just as well remain awake until daylight, as they wanted to be up the first thing, anyhow.

They did not have to wait very long.

Pretty soon the first gray streaks denoting the approaching day showed in the east and then the grayness gradually assumed a lighter color, and finally a haze of pink came up.

In a few minutes this turned to a golden yellow and then it was light enough for them to look all over the town and see what sort of a place it was.

Seven Spot was really a headquarters where the owners of the outlying ranches obtained their supplies, though considerable mining was carried on there, too.

It was not much of a town. In the east it would have been called a village, and not a very large one, at that.

The buildings were mostly of the shanty type, though here and there quite a substantial house could be seen.

Just now everything was very still there, but in a short time there would be plenty of life there, for already the smoke could be seen coming from the tops of the chimneys.

The residents of Seven Spot were getting ready for another day.

Wild was not surprised to note the fact that there were at least half a dozen saloons in the place.

The majority of them were pretty tough looking resorts, too, judging from outside appearances.

There was one place that bore a sign indicating that it was a tavern that looked as though it might be a pretty respectable sort of public house, but our hero had decided that it was just about as well to eat their breakfast in the camp.

Half an hour later as many as a dozen of the less than two hundred of the population were astir.

The camp on the bank of the little creek was soon observed by some of them and it was not long before half a dozen rough looking men were heading toward it.

"Here's where we will have to explain our appearance here, boys," said Wild, looking at his partners and smiling.

"I don't like ther looks of them galoots very much," retorted the scout.

"They might take it in their heads to order us to quit this spot," added Dart. "If one of them happens to own this property I suppose we will have to move, unless they are different from what their looks make them appear."

There were just six of the men and they were all rather vicious looking.

They did not say a word until they reached the camp and came to a halt.

Then one, who was evidently the man selected to be the spokesman, exclaimed:

"Where did yer drop from, strangers?"

"Oh, we landed here about an hour before daylight, and we thought we wouldn't bother the people at the tavern just then, but would camp here till things got awake in the town," answered Wild.

"Yer did, hey? Well, don't yer know that this land along here is owned by folks what lives here?"

"That shouldn't make any difference. We are not hurting the land in the least."

"But it does make a difference. You'd better pull up stakes an' light out of here afore yer git in trouble."

Young Wild West looked at the man in his cool and easy way.

"Do you own this property?" he asked.

"No, but there's folks what live in this here town what does, though. You take my advice an' git!"

"Does any of the rest of you own this property?" Wild asked, looking at the rest of the men, and not noticing the last remark of the fellow, at all.

None of them said they did, so our hero went on:

"Well, I guess if you want us to move from here you will have to go and get the man who owns the ground to tell us to do it. Now I am going to tell you fellows something! We are honest people, and would not touch anything that did not belong to us in a harmful way. We have a way of taking care of ourselves, too, so you had better be careful how you behave. If you get to acting harshly toward us I may take a notion to shoot your ears off!"

This was said in such a cool and easy way that the six men were surprised so much that they looked at each other, as though they wondered whether their ears had told them correctly or not.

The leader of the party finally found the use of his tongue.

"Are—are you talkin' ter us?" he gasped.

"Certainly. Now just move away from here as quick as you can. Find the man who owns this property and tell him we are here. Do you hear what I say!"

The boy seldom lost his temper, but he was fast doing it now.

But he realized it right away, and then, as coolly as though he was simply taking a shot at a mark, he jerked a revolver from his belt and fired at the spokesman of the party.

As the report sounded a button disappeared from the coat of the man, who stood with his side exposed to Wild.

He was wearing the garment open and it was not a difficult thing to do.

Crack!

Another button flew off the coat before the man realized what the first shot meant.

One of the others put his hand on the butt of a revolver.

He had just pulled it from the holster when——

Crack!

"Ow-wow!" he yelled and the weapon dropped to the ground as though he had suddenly found it to be red-hot.

But Wild had not touched his flesh with the bullet.

He had that trick down so fine that he could hit the barrel of a shooter every time, and the sudden impact of the bullet invariably caused a shock similiar to that given by electricity to dart up the arm of the person who held it.

Charlie and Jim now joined in the game.

The former put a bullet through the high-topped Mexican sombrero one of them had on and the latter neatly clipped a piece of another's boot heel.

"We are just showing you what we could do if we got in earnest," said Young Wild West, still retaining the smile

on his handsome face. "You had better move, I think, for the next time I shoot someone will drop, and he will never get up again!"

The six villains turned with one accord and ran for the nearest saloon, which was only a couple of hundred yards away.

At this juncture Arietta, Anna and Eloise came out of the tent.

The former had her rifle in her hand.

"What is the matter, Wild?" she asked.

"Oh, we were just showing half a dozen of the residents of the town that we knew how to handle our shooters, that's all," was the reply. "They ordered us to break up camp and get off this property, and we didn't want to do it. There they go! I guess they found out they had made a mistake."

Arietta looked at the retreating rascals and laughed.

"More outlaws, I guess," she observed.

"The woods is full of them, it seems, Et. But never mind; I think we can manage to take care of ourselves. Wing, you and Hop just get a hustle on and start a fire. I feel like eating some breakfast. I can do without sleep for a night, but I must have my meals."

The two Chinamen hastened to obey.

There happened to be plenty of wood near at hand, so it was not long before they had a fire going.

Then the girls assisted them and the coffee-pot was hung over the blaze, while they got some steaks of venison and bear meat ready for broiling when the coals got just right.

Before the breakfast was ready a man in the garb of a miner was seen approaching the little camp.

"Mornin', strangers!" he called out in marked contrast to the way they had been addressed by their previous visitors.

"Good morning," answered Wild, pleasantly.

"I'm ther man what owns ther land you're camped on," went on the newcomer. "I heard Gil Griddle an' some others jest talkin' about how they had ordered yer ter leave here, an' yer wouldn't. I come over here ter tell yer that yer kin stay here jest as long as yer want ter. I'm Lige Booster, an' I believe in a fair shake out of ther box every time!"

"Well, I am glad that you look at it that way, Mr. Boster. We thought we were doing no harm here, so when those galoofs told us to get off we wouldn't do it. I guess they found out that we were not to be fooled a great deal with."

"I heard ther shootin' from my shanty over there, an' I jest watched what was goin' on. I only seen ther last part of it, though. My! but didn't yer tame 'em down! That's ther worst gang we've got in Seven Spot, though there's plenty of their kind hanging about ther town."

"Is that so? Do you happen to know a man named Dutton?"

"I reckon I do. He's got a claim here, but he's been cleaned out as many times that I reckon it don't hardly

pay him ter dig more'n enough ter live out of it. Dutton ain't ther only one what's been treated that way, though; there's lots of honest fellers here, though Seven Spot is ther worst town fur thieves an' outlaws, fur its size, this side of ther Missouri River!"

"Well, I met Dutton in Denver; he told me about the town. I was just interested enough to take a trip out this way. My name is Young Wild West."

"I thought so. I've heerd Dutton speak of yer. Hello! Here he comes now!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### WILD AND HIS PARTNERS FIND MUCH OPPOSITION IN SEVEN SPOT.

Wild looked and saw a man coming, whom he at once recognized as Dutton.

"Hello!" came the cry; "so you've come to Seven Spot, eh, Young Wild West?"

"Yes, we thought we'd drop around out this way, since we had no particular place to go just now," our hero answered.

Dutton came up and shook hands with Wild and his partners, and then the girls were introduced.

The miner shook his head as though he was in doubt about something.

"I'm sorry you brought the women-folks with you," he said. "This ain't jest ther place for them. Seven Spot can't be beat for being a bad town."

"Well, we thought it would be all right, and I guess it will. You see, when we leave here we are going down to Yuma, and from there we will go to my ranch in Texas. I guess the girls will be all right during our stay in Seven Spot. We have already had a little trouble, as this man will be able to tell you."

Lige Booster nodded.

"You ought ter have seen Gil Griddle git called a little while ago, Dutton," he said. "Young Wild West made him an' five men what belongs ter his gang think they had struck a hornets' nest! My, but wasn't ther bullets flyin'!"

"Did you drop any of them?" and Dutton looked around inquiringly.

"Oh, no!" answered Wild; "I never had any such intentions, nor did Charlie or Jim. We just gave them an exhibition of a little straight and quick shooting, that's all."

"Well, I hope you don't have any further trouble with them, although I think they will try to get square with you. You must keep an eye on them. If you are going to stay here in Seven Spot for a while I guess I have got a good place for you to put up at. I've got a shanty that isn't occupied right next to where I live, and I think it would be a good idea for you to take it. There is a table and a few chairs in it, so with the things you have got you could make out finely, I think."

"All right, Mr. Dutton. I guess we will accept of your offer. Just as soon as we have eaten breakfast we will take possession of the shanty."

"Well, there it is, right over there."

He pointed it out, and then turned to go.

"Won't you stop and have breakfast with us?" Wild asked.

"No, thank you. My Chinese cook has my breakfast ready by this time, so you will excuse me. Come right over as soon as you can."

"All right, Mr. Dutton, we will."

Our hero then invited Lige Booster to stay to breakfast and he accepted the invitation.

"I ain't got no one ter cook fur me," he explained, "an' I hadn't started in ter git anything ready myself when I heard ther shootin'. I know yer wouldn't ask me ter eat with yer if yer didn't mean it."

"That's right, pard!" spoke up Charlie. "You're welcome ter share what we've got, an' don't yer furgit it!"

"I knowed that," said the miner, as one of the Chinamen made a place for him.

While they were eating breakfast a few men came close by the camp and walked back again, but no one said anything to them.

They were curious to see who the strangers who had arrived in the night were, and it was quite likely they had heard what the shooting was about.

"I'll go with yer ter ther shanty Dutton was telling yer about," said Lige Booster when they were through with the meal. "It's a putty good shanty, an' the young ladies will be better off in it than they would be sleepin' in ther tent there. There's no tellin' what some of ther bad galoos what hang around Seven Spot might take a notion ter do."

"Well, if the place was ten times as bad as you and Dutton say it is, we wouldn't get out of it until we got good and ready," answered Young Wild West. "I'm going to stay here until the outlaws and villains around here have been driven out, and that won't be a very long time, either."

Booster looked at the boy in admiration.

"I reckon you're jest ther one ter lead ther decent men in ther town ag'in ther rascals," he observed. "All they want is a leader. There's enough good men here ter whip ther bad gang, if they only got together an' thought so."

"Well, you talk it over with a few of them," was the retort. "Then let me know what they say. We are going to stay here until the gang who call themselves the Oregon Outlaws are whipped to a standstill. Their leader will be here before night, and probably the whole crowd will be. I happened to overhear them talking."

"You heard ther Oregon Outlaws talkin'?" echoed Booster in surprise.

"Yes, we met them last night just before dark. They were going to rob us, but we wouldn't let them. I happened to get the drop on Doc Dean, the leader, and made him order his men to leave the spot. He was glad enough to

do it, I guess. After they had gone a while I took a scout around and found where they were camped. I listened to what they were saying, and among other things, Doc Dean said that if he did not fix me before we got to Seven Spot he would meet me there in some disguise, and that he would pick a row with me and shoot me. I am waiting for him to arrive. You want to be on hand when he tackles me. You will see whether he is able to down me or not. I don't want to brag, but if all men were no worse than Doc Dean is to get the drop on I would never be afraid of getting shot while facing a man."

"Somebody is likely ter die with his boots on afore sunset, then, I reckon," said the miner, half to himself.

"That is true. But it is not going to be me, if I can possibly help it," answered Wild, calmly.

"An' I reckon we'll see ter it that yer kin help it, Wild," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie.

In a few minutes they were getting ready to break up the camp and go over to the shanty that Dutton had been kind enough to offer to them.

The shanty had been occupied by a miner and his family, who had sold out to Dutton and left the town, on account of the trouble he had with the outlaws, who were constantly robbing and annoying him.

Dutton had no use for it, and as he had been unable to hire it, he was glad to let our friends have the use of it while they remained at Seven Spot.

In half an hour's time they were located at the shanty and the girls were busy fixing up the interior in a home-like style.

Quite a crowd gathered about the building, some of whom were the bad element, so Lige Booster said.

Booster was one of the sort who never take sides with any faction, but prefer to allow things to go without interfering.

But the fact that he was now with the strangers, and helping them, at that, made Gil Griddle and his men sore on him, to use the expression.

"I guess this is all right, boys," said Young Wild West to his partners, after everything was arranged to their full satisfaction. "Now we will fix up a sort of temporary stable for the horses, and then we will be all right for the few days we expect to remain here."

They went out behind the shanty and cut a number of cedars that were pretty high ones, and then these were leaned against the rear of the shanty, so they would form a pretty good shelter for the horses at night.

In the daytime it was not necessary to house them, since they could be tied with lariats and be allowed to browse the tough grass that grew in the vicinity.

Though pretty well dried out, the grass was still succulent, and it made an admirable fodder for the animals.

When this had been done to the satisfaction of our friends Wild decided to take a walk over to the part of the town where the tavern and saloons were located.

He felt that the girls would be able to take care of them-

selves in the shanty, as they had the Chinamen to help them, in case anything happened

But our hero did not think that the men in the place were bad enough to interfere with the girls.

Since he had come to Seven Spot he wanted to keep his word. He meant to help clean out the outlaws and rascals who made the town a headquarters.

As he made the proposition to take a walk around Jim, who had been talking to his sweetheart, Eloise, said:

"I guess I had better remain here with the girls, Wild. Eloise has fears that the men might come here and insult them if they see us go away."

"All right," was the reply; "just as you say, Jim. I hardly think anything like that will happen, though, for generally miners, no matter how bad they are, have a certain respect for females."

"Well, me an' you will take a walk around, Wild," spoke up the scout. "I want ter size up ther people here an' see how many good ones there is ter be found."

The two left the shanty and proceeded down the hill where the buildings were the thickest.

They came upon Lige Booster and Dutton, who were talking to a lot of miners, who seemed to be in an angry mood.

When our two friends came up and paused before them there was a deep silence.

One of the men was Gil Griddle and the five men who had been with him when he attempted to drive our friends from the ground they had camped upon were there, too.

Dutton was the first to speak.

"Young Wild West," said he, "these men say I had no right to let you have the shanty on the hill to stop in, and I can't convince them that I have a perfect right to treat my friends as I see fit. I have told them that I don't want to get in trouble with them, but they say that unless I put you out of the shanty there will be trouble."

"Is that so, Mr. Dutton?" retorted Wild, looking at the crowd in his cool and easy way. "Well, I don't want you to get into any trouble on our account, so if you say the word, we'll get out of the shanty and pitch camp somewhere in the town. I'll guarantee that these men won't run us out of the town, too! There is a rascally fellow right there, who started to pick a row with us this morning, and I thought he had enough of it. But if he hasn't, he has but to say the word and he will get all he is looking for, and a great deal more!"

The boy pointed at Gil Griddle as he spoke, and with his hands within easy reach of his revolvers, he stood looking at the villain.

Griddle winced slightly, but made no reply.

However, one of the others took it up.

He was a stalwart young fellow of twenty-one, who looked as though he might be very strong and active.

But one look at him would have convinced the ordinary observer that he was one of the sort who have little respect for the feelings of others, and whose best forte was fighting.

"See here!" he exclaimed, as he stepped forward. "I guess you don't know what kind of a place you have struck, do you, young fellow? Seven Spot has got ther reputation of bein' a town where folks does as they please, an' when a galoot ain't liked, an' is told so, he has ter git out! You ain't liked here, so yer know what ter do!"

"It seems strange that you don't like me, my friend," answered Wild. "I never did anything to you, that I know of. I never saw you in my life before. And yet you tell me I am not liked. Is it because I shot the buttons off the coat of that galoot, who calls himself Gil Griddle?"

"Well, Gil's ther head man of this here town, an' them what don't want ter do as he says ain't liked."

"Oh! So that is the way it is, eh? Well, now let me tell you something! I never was run out of a town or mining camp yet, and I am not going to be run out of this one. If that don't suit you just show your hand. I am ready for any game that you care to open."

At this juncture Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart drew their revolvers.

"If it's hot lead you're lookin' fur I reckon yer kin git 'commodated," the former observed.

Gil Griddle hastily got behind those who were nearest the three.

He knew how well they could shoot and it seemed that he did not want to hear their shooters begin to crack.

"It looks to me as though this is all bluff," went on our hero, after a pause. "You fellows don't want us here, and you are trying to scare us into going away. We are not going to leave until we get good and ready, so what are you going to do about it?"

The men looked at each other, as though waiting for an inspiration.

But no one made a suggestion.

By this time more of the miners and ruffianly fellows hanging about the town gathered at the spot.

It looked as though our three friends were in a pretty tight place, but they did not act that way.

They were all remarkably cool, especially Young Wild West.

But coolness is what counts in trying times.

Seeing that no one offered to say or do anything, Wild nodded to the powerful looking fellow and said:

"I guess you need a good thrashing to make you more civil to strangers in the future. I am just in the humor to give it to you, too, so get ready!"

## CHAPTER V.

### THE NEVADA HEADQUARTERS OF THE OREGON OUTLAWS.

Doc Dean and his gang, which he called the Oregon outlaws, did not think they had what might be called a "soft snap" ahead of them.

The way Young Wild West and his partners had surprised them was something that they were not likely to forget right away.

They fully realized that they had a stiff fight on hand to overcome the three, for they had seen just enough of the girls to know that they would be apt to do some shooting, too.

About an hour after the return of the man who had been sent to spy upon the camp of our friends Doc Dean arose to his feet and said:

"I guess I'll take a look at those people myself, so I can get a good idea of the best way to go at them in the morning."

"You'll find that they've got a putty snug sort of a place there under ther cliff, Doc," spoke up the man called Wock.

"Well, that makes it all the more necessary that I should have a good look at their camp. To tell the truth, I didn't see a great deal of it just before dark when we were there; that confounded Young Wild West got the drop on me so quick that I didn't have much of a chance to look around."

Having acknowledged this much, the villainous leader of the band started off in the darkness.

Doc Dean was a young man well used to the ways of the west, since he had been born in Portland, Oregon and had spent the greater part of his life in the wild parts of that state.

Consequently he was pretty well up in woodcraft, and was perfectly capable of stealing upon the camp of an enemy without being discovered.

But, though he did not know it, of course, there was no necessity for his being cautious just then, since our friends had been gone from the spot an hour.

The leader of the Oregon Outlaws proceeded slowly and pretty soon he got around so he was able to see the fire, which Young Wild West and his friends had left burning when they went away.

It was all but burned out, though, and it was only the embers that caused the light the villain saw.

Seems to me they are either asleep, or else they are lying in wait for us to attack them," mused the outlaw leader, as he crawled a little nearer. "I fancy that Young Wild West is not one who can be caught napping any kind of fashion. But I will have that golden-haired girl before sunrise to-morrow morning!"

Nearer and nearer he crept, and presently it dawned upon him that the birds had flown!

The campfire was all that remained of the camp.

At first he could scarcely believe the evidences of his senses, but finally he got up and walked boldly into the hollow among the boulders and rocks.

The villain uttered an oath and then started hurriedly back for his camp.

"We have been fooled, boys!" he cried. "The birds have flown!"

"What!" cried Wock. "Why, it looked ter me as though they meant ter stay there all night."

"But they have gone, just the same, and how long they have been gone I don't know. By the looks of the smouldering fire they left behind them, it is half an hour or more."

"Well, what are we goin' ter do about 'em, Doc?" asked one of the men.

"Do about it!" was the quick retort; "why, mount our horses and try to catch them, of course."

"If they've got as much start as you say they have we'll have a hard time doin' it," said Wock, shaking his head. "Our horses is putty well tired out, an' ther most of 'em ain't ther best horseflesh in ther world, I reckon."

"Well, we'll start for Seven Spot right away, then. If we don't catch them before they get there we will after they get there."

The villains at once proceeded to saddle their steeds.

It was plain that the majority of them did not like the idea of starting out just then, but they made no complaint aloud, though in low whispers they talked among themselves.

But they mounted and got away a few minutes later and then the tired horses put on a spurt and carried them along for a distance of about ten miles before they gave out.

Doc Dean knew it was no use.

Perhaps half a dozen of the eleven horses might be able to catch up with those who had eluded them, but he was afraid to tackle Young Wild West with that number.

So he contented himself with following the trail, and about an hour after daylight they came in sight of the town.

"Now, boys, we'll get around to our headquarters this side of the line," Dean said, as he turned his horse and left the trail at the commencement of the short pass that led right into the town. "We won't go over to the other side until this Young Wild West business is fixed up. I am going to take the girl into Oregon, though, so the quicker we're able to catch her the better it will be."

The men all seemed glad that they were so near to the end of their journey.

They had been practicing their lawless trade at a point some two hundred miles from Seven Spot on the line of the Union Pacific and were now just returning.

As they reached the top of the hill they suddenly came upon a small shanty that stood among the trees.

Smoke was coming out of the chimney that was made of sticks and mud, showing that the occupant was probably engaged in cooking his breakfast.

Instead of riding their horses up the narrow path that led to the door of the shanty they followed a little cut that was about fifteen feet deep and as many in width until they came to what appeared to be a solid wall of rock, upon the top of which the shanty was built.

Then, without dismounting, Doc Dean placed his fingers to his mouth and gave a sharp whistle.

"Hello!" came the answer from above and then a man,

bareheaded and in his shirt sleeves, came out of the little building and looked down upon them.

"He gave a nod of welcome, and then said:

"Want ter go right in, I s'pose, eh, Doc?"

"Yes, Handy," was the reply. "We're tired out, and the boys want rest, as well as the horses."

"All right. I'll git right down there an' let yer in."

The man quickly disappeared inside the shanty, and then after a wait of two or three minutes a curtain of canvas that was painted in exact imitation of the dull gray rocks rolled slowly up, disclosing an opening that was amply large enough for the men to ride through two abreast.

Doc Dean cast a glance to the rear, and seeing no one, gave the word and they rode through the opening.

It was really a ravine that they were entering.

The shanty had been built directly over the mouth of it and the curtain dropped to make it appear that it was built upon a rocky bluff.

Twenty feet back of the house a little waterfall tumbled down into the ravine and then a stream wound itself toward the other end of the split in the mountain side.

Between the rear of the house and the fall the ravine had been covered with felled trees so that scarcely a particle of light could get through, and this formed a sort of underground apartment, and which the Oregon Outlaws claimed as their headquarters on the Nevada side of the line.

The quarters were dry, notwithstanding the fact that the waterfall was so close, and they had been fixed up to accommodate the villains in pretty good shape.

The sleeping part was directly underneath the shanty and bunks were so arranged as to fill up the spaces on either side, allowing a passageway between.

The fact that they had to come right through this place with their horses did not seem to disturb the villains any.

They had roughed it for years and they were glad to get such a snug place to put up at.

As the chimney of the shanty ran down to the level beneath it, and there was a fireplace there, it was an easy matter for the outlaws to keep fires going without letting their presence there be known.

The man called Handy who occupied the shanty was supposed to be an eccentric hunter, and he was never bothered by the men of Seven Spot, good or bad.

But he really was a member of the Oregon Outlaws, and he had been the means of furnishing the subject for more than one robbery in the little town.

Though not a member of the band, Gil Griddle was a warm friend of the outlaw leader, and sometimes Dean would throw something in the miner's way that would greatly add to his supply of money.

Well, Doc, how did yer make out on your little trip?" Handy asked, as he looked at the outlaw captain and smiled.

"Very good," was the reply. "Anything new at Seven Spot?"

"Not much. I wasn't there yisterday, though. I've been doin' a little huntin' ter keep up appearances. You oughter see ther pelts I've got up in ther shanty."

"Well, that is right. Keep up the hunting now and then. No one would ever suspect that you are anything but a hunter who desires to be let alone, and who never bothers anyone. I fancy that there is going to be a rather warm time in Seven Spot before many hours, Handy."

"How's that, Doc?"

"Well, there is a young fellow down there, who got the drop on me last night and made me drive the boys off. I was caught neatly, and I had to give in. There is no use in denying it."

"A young feller done that, you say?"

"Yes, a mere boy, and his name is Young Wild West. However, he is a dangerous customer, no matter if he is young. He has got to die before the sun goes down, Handy, and I am going to be the one to make him die. Then I am going to steal a girl from his party and take her over the line into Oregon. I am here for business!"

"How many has this Young Wild West got with him," the hunter asked.

"Only a man and a boy, three girls and two Chinamen."

"An' you let 'em drive yer away from 'em last night?"

"I certainly did, Handy. But I wanted to live a little longer, you know. If my men had raised a hand to fire a shot my life would have been snuffed out in an instant. I am a judge of character, you know, and I could tell that Young Wild West meant business."

"How is it that you didn't git him afterwards, then?"

"They gave us the slip and come on to Seven Spot. We meant to get them before daylight, because I was certain that they had a good sum of money with them. But they gave us the slip, so we had to follow the trail, since our horses were too tired to overtake them before they got here."

"Well, if you don't git him, an' git ther gal yer want, too, no one could, Doc."

The captain smiled, for he took this as a great compliment, and compliments he liked.

"I'll take a walk into the town pretty soon," he said.

"They all know me as Gambler Dick here, and some of my friends will be glad to see me back. I told them you were a relative of mine, and that I came here to visit you now and then."

"Yes, yer told 'em that when yer first struck Seven Spot. I told 'em ther same thing. I said you was my nephew."

"And they don't care who the boys are. They know they show up once in a while, and that is all there is to it."

While the two were talking two of the outlaws were busy getting breakfast ready for the crowd.

Handy said he had not yet had his breakfast, so he invited Doc to eat with him.

"All right," was the reply. "Boys, I am going to eat breakfast with Handy. I am his nephew when I am in Seven Spot, you know."

The men nodded.

They were satisfied to anything the captain did.

Dean followed Handy up a roughly made ladder and entered the shanty through a trap door that was just large enough to permit them to get through.

Then the hunter quickly cooked the breakfast he had been preparing when the outlaws came to the shanty, and when it was ready both sat down and ate.

"I've been up all night, Handy, and I didn't get but a few winks the night before," observed the outlaw captain when he had swallowed his coffee and lighted a cigar. "But I have made up my mind that I am not going to sleep again until the young fellow I told you about is dead. I will put on the suit I have here, and then with the blonde beard on my face, I guess Young Wild West will not know me. It won't take long for me to get in a row with him and fire the shot that will finish him!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### WILD STARTS A MOVEMENT AGAINST THE OUTLAWS.

Young Wild West had decided that the best way to impress the miners was to thrash the powerful young fellow.

He felt certain that there was not a person there but that thought he would be unable to whip the man, saving his partners.

"What is your name, my friend?" Wild asked, coolly looking at the fellow he had challenged.

"Tom, ther Stinger, is ther handle I go by in this camp," was the reply, when he found the use of his tongue. "I reckon you'll think I'm a Stinger, too!"

"Well, you won't sting me bad enough to make it show, I guess. Are you ready for business?"

"Do yer mean it when yer say yer want ter fight me?" asked the Stinger, his eyes bulging in pure astonishment.

"Certainly I mean it. I want to show you and the rest of the gang here that I am not in the habit of taking orders from anyone, and that I can take care of myself at any stage of the game."

"Well, I'll fight yer, but yer won't stand no show with me."

"Oh, yes, I will. Are you ready?"

"Yes!"

"An' if yer go ter usin' a shooter or knife afore yer git enough you'll git a streak of daylight through your head!" spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "This is goin' ter be a square fight."

"I won't have ter use anything but my fists, I reckon," retorted the Stinger, as he squared off awkwardly before Young Wild West.

Wild was not the least bit afraid that he would not settle the fellow in short order.

He knew he was a powerful man, and that he could probably hit a blow that would fell a steer, but that made no difference to him.

He did not intend to let him land a blow upon him.

"Take your time and be sure you hit where you aim for," he said, and then he made a feint with his left.

The Stinger dodged and threw up his hands.

Biff!

Wild's right fist shot out and caught him on the neck.

Back the young miner staggered, for the blow was a straight one, well delivered.

But the dashing young deadshot did not stop at that.

He was right after him, and before he could recover two more blows were landed.

One of them fetched him on the nose and a stream of blood was the result.

That woke the Stinger up.

"I'll make mince-meat of yer!" he roared, rushing and swinging as he came.

A fellow as awkward as himself would have been beaten to the ground before that fierce rush, but not so with Young Wild West.

He avoided the rush with the greatest of ease and sent in two more hot ones that caused the Stinger to reel like a drunken man.

But he did not go down.

Our hero realized that he was about as tough as they made them in that respect.

But he was going to knock him down before he got through with him.

He made up his mind to that, and when Wild made up his mind to do a certain thing he always did it.

So far he had only received one blow, and that a glancing one that failed to even jar him.

"How do you like it as far as you've gone?" Wild asked, tantalizingly.

"I'll show yer!" was the rejoinder, and then the Stinger gathered himself and made another rush.

But the madder he got the wilder he became.

His blows only hit the empty air, for our hero avoided them with great ease.

He kept sending in one now and then, and at the end of two minutes the burly young miner was pretty well exhausted.

Not one man in the crowd had offered to interfere, so far.

They simply looked on in amazement.

There was a broad grin on the face of Cheyenne Charlie, for he thoroughly enjoyed the scene.

He was watching the crowd, especially the men in it they had had the trouble with that morning.

Wild knew he had his opponent just where he wanted him, so he determined to end the fight.

It was quite plain that the Stinger was made of good stuff, and would stick to it until thoroughly beaten.

The best thing to do was to land a blow that would give him enough of it.

"You haven't got enough yet, eh?" Wild said, as he dodged another blow and retaliated by landing on the left optic of his adversary. "Well, now I am going to knock you down, and you will lie there for a minute or two before you think of getting up."

He fainted with his left and the ruse worked to perfection.

Spat.

With all his weight behind it, he landed a blow between the Stinger's eyes and down he went like a log.

He did not make the least effort to get up, either, and then it was that a howl of astonishment went up from the lookers-on.

"Gentlemen," said our hero, folding his arms and looking around him, "is there anyone else here who says I have got to get out of Seven Spot? I can whip the man who says so, and it don't make any difference which way he wants to fight, either!"

"What's that?" exclaimed a voice from the rear of the crowd, and then a newcomer put in appearance.

He was a neat looking man with a blonde beard, and when the crowd saw him a shout went up.

"It's Gambler Dick!" someone said. "He'll take a hand, I reckon."

Wild's eyes were upon the man before the words were hardly out of his mouth.

The boy was just enough nettled at the way the miners had acted to be ready for anything, or anybody that came along.

"I guess you heard what I said," he retorted. "If you want to fight me come on!"

The man, who was no other than Doc Dean in disguise, pushed his way past Charlie and up to Wild.

His hand slid to his belt, and observing the motion, Cheyenne Charlie thrust out his hand.

"If you're not bullet proof you're going to die, young fellow!" cried the Oregon Outlaw, and then he jerked the revolver from the holster. But a sinewy hand caught his wrist in a vise-like grip.

"I reckon you don't do that!" said the scout, calmly. "Wild, ther galoot thought he had yer, I reckon."

"Let go his wrist, Charlie!" came the reply.

Wild had his hand on his own revolver now.

Charlie obeyed.

But as he did so the disguised outlaw let his weapon drop back in the holster.

He turned white to his hair.

For the second time he had been baffled.

But the villain was not going to make known who he was.

"I'm a friend of that young man, and I thought you had downed him with a knife or a bullet," he said, pointing to the Stinger, who was now sitting up and looking around in a dazed sort of a way.

"Oh! is that it?" retorted our hero, coolly. "Well, you

made a mistake when you tried to catch me napping, whoever you are. It is a wonder my partner did not drop you dead in your tracks, instead of catching your wrist."

"I've a notion ter do it yet!" spoke up the scout, swinging his revolver around. "I won't feel satisfied till I've plugged some sneakin' galoot! Where's ther one what wants ter shuffle off this mortal coil? Do I hear anyone speak?"

There was a deathly silence.

But Charlie was started now.

"Push ther galoot what calls himself Gil Griddle out so I kin see him!" he went on. "I'm goin' ter send him down ther road barefooted. Push him out, I say! If yer don't I'll shoot at him through someone's body!"

Those who were standing in front of Griddle got out of the way with wonderful quickness.

Crack!

The scout's bullet hit one of the villain's boots.

Crack!

The other boot got the same dose.

But that was quite enough for Griddle, who was really as much of a coward as anyone in the town, notwithstanding that he wielded a certain power over the bad element.

He turned and ran for the nearest saloon as fast as he could.

Wild could not help noticing that about half the lookers-on appreciated what Charlie was doing.

Crack!

The scout fired for the third time, and with a yell Gil Griddle leaped into the air and came down in a heap.

But he got up in an instant and started on a run again.

"I only shaved a piece from ther sole of his boot," exclaimed Charlie to the crowd. "I feel jest like makin' a button-hole in ther back of his neck, but I ain't goin' ter do it. It ain't always proper fur a feller ter do jest what he feels like doin'."

Gambler Dick, alias Doc Dean, now turned and followed in the direction Griddle had taken.

Those who believed in him and stuck to him sneaked along after him.

The last to go was the Stinger, who got up rather unsteadily.

He could only see out of one eye, and that not very well.

The burly young man had been badly worsted in his fight with Young Wild West.

Wild looked around and counted seventeen men remaining there.

They all looked to be honest fellows and he took it that they did not approve of the methods pursued by Gil Griddle.

"Boys," he said, though some of them were old enough to be his grandfather, "I guess you would like to have things run a little straighter in Seven Spot than they have been going. I can tell that by your looks. Probably the majority of the residents don't want things run straight, but that is no reason why they should not. Just

say the word and I will undertake to straighten things out here. Of course if I undertake it I will expect the cooperation of all those interested. What do you say?"

"Boys, what kin yer say ter that?" cried Dutton, taking off his hat. "I, fur one, am goin' ter break loose. Hooray!"

Then the rest joined in, to a man, and the shout that went up must have been heard all through the little town.

"Ther outlaws an' bad varmints around these diggin's will try ter clean us out putty quick now, I s'pose," spoke up Lige Booster. "But I'm ready ter fight, if I wasn't before. I've believed that ther easiest way was ther best ter git along in this town. But when I sees a young feller an' his two pards come here an' whip ther duff out of sich galoots as Gil Griddle, ther Stinger an' Gambler Dick, why then I say is ther time fur us ter make a break an' throw off the shackles what has been keepin' Seven Spot far in ther rear. I'm ready ter fight till ter last drop of blood leaves my body, boys!"

This spirited little speech caused the men to cheer again.

"Just organize yourselves into a vigilance committee and elect a judge," said Wild, for he now felt certain that it would not be long before the outlaws would be brought to their senses.

They did as he told them, as far as they could, right then and there.

They wanted him for the chairman, but he declined to act and it fell upon Dutton, who was the best educated one of the lot.

In half an hour twenty-three had enlisted in the movement.

"How about ther judge Young Wild West spoke about, Dutton?" asked Lige Booster.

"I'll appoint a judge afore to-night," was the reply. "We want someone who'll do the fair and square thing, and it will take time to think it over. However, if anyone has a suggestion to make, let it come."

Then nearly all of them shouted the name of Young Wild West.

But our hero quickly made them understand that he would not do, as he expected to be one of the leaders in the fight for good government.

Charlie and Jim were both suggested, but Wild assured the men that they would not do, either.

"Well, we want an outsider, anyhow," said Lige Booster, "so I'm goin' ter suggest a name. She's only a gal, boys, but if you'd seen her with her rifle, ready fur business, this mornin', like I did, you'd say she'd make ther kind of a judge we want. I refers ter ther young gal in Young Wild West's party, which is named Arietta."

The miners were ready to accept anyone who was suggested to fill the office of judge for the committee, so with one accord they let out a shout of approval.

Wild tried to persuade them that it would not do for a girl to act as a judge, but they would not listen to him.

They had given in to every objection he had made previous, but now they were obstinate.

"All right, boys," he said; "if Arietta is willing she shall be the judge of Seven Spot until this business is settled."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE LAW AND ORDER LEAGUE OF SEVEN SPOT.

Wild and Charlie did not wait until the miners who were working came to their noonday meal.

They knew that the agitation had begun and that those who had formed the vigilance committee would work for all they were worth.

They started back for the shanty that had been turned over to them by Dutton, and as they walked along our hero turned to his companion and observed:

"Well, what do you think about the proposition to make Arietta a judge, Charlie?"

"I think it a good one," was the quick reply.

The dashing young deadshot looked at him in surprise.

"I am a little surprised to hear you say that," he said.

"Well, maybe you are, Wild. But I'm sayin' that 'cause I know you believe in givin' a man a square deal, no matter how bad he is. If it was left ter me ter judge them Oregon Outlaws, I would say hang everyone of 'em. I wouldn't stop ter look fur evidence, 'cause I know that they meant ter clean us out, an' that means that they've cleaned others out afore. Arietta wouldn't sentence no man ter be hung, without she knowed he'd been guilty of real murder, which is ter kill a feller bein' fur ther purpose of robbin' him of what he's got, or shootin' him when he ain't lookin'. She would be apt ter be a little lenient, as they say, an' talk ter him kind like. Then she'd tell him ter go ter some other place an' try life over ag'in. I don't approve of that kind of judgment fur sich galoots as is runnin' around loose in this section, but I know you do, so that's why I say that Arietta would be all right as a judge."

"Well, we'll see what she says about it, Charlie. If she takes a notion to be a judge, all right."

When they got to the shanty they found Jim Dart and the girls busy watching a game of dominoes that was being played by the two Chinamen.

Hop was cheating his brother right and left and, of course, was bound to win the game.

That was Hop's way.

He could not do a thing square if he tried.

He could cheat at cards in such a slick way that the best of professional gamblers could not catch him at it.

But what he was doing now in the game of dominoes was such cheating as to make the lookers-on smile.

He was playing sixes to deuces, fours to aces and blanks to fives, but innocent Wing Wah did not notice it.

"Quite a game," said Wild, as he came in.

"Yes," answered Arietta, "anything to make a little amusement for us. I have an idea that it is going to be rather dull in this town for us. There is a bad gang here, who don't want us, and then the Oregon Outlaws might come along and force us to remain in the shanty, for fear of getting shot. If such a thing does happen Hop Wah will have to study up all the magic tricks he ever knew to entertain us."

"I guess things won't be so dull as all that," Wild answered, with a laugh. "Arietta, you have been appointed a judge for the town of Seven Spot by the vigilance committee that was organized a little while ago. You are to pass judgment upon all who are brought before you by the committee and the sentence you give them will be carried out to the very letter. How would you like to be the judge to sit on the bench at Seven Spot?"

The girl looked at him in surprise.

She noticed the twinkle in his eyes, but felt that he was in earnest, for all that.

"Me be a judge, Wild!" she exclaimed. "Why, what nonsense!"

"It ain't no nonsense, at all, Arietta," spoke up the scout. "Ther Vigilantes had hard work ter pick out a judge, an' it was not till your name was mentioned that they decided on one. It was ther man called Lige Booster what nominated yer fur ther position, an' yer was elected without no opposition."

"Just think of that! Arietta as a Judge!" cried Anna, and then she bowed with mock politeness to the fair sweetheart of Young Wild West.

This caused all hands to laugh.

Wild then told them just what had been said and done down in the village and when he had finished Jim and Anna decided that Arietta should accept the honor that had been bestowed upon her, by all means.

Eloise was not so sure but that it might be a dangerous position for the girl to take, so she refused to give any advice on the subject.

When Arietta had thought for a minute or two she looked at Wild and said:

"If you think I could administer justice to those brought before me, Wild, I will take the position."

"I guess if you couldn't act square with the scoundrels, no one could," was the retort. "I'll tell the men that you have decided to be the judge for Seven Spot as long as we stop here."

"All right, then. Now I will have to study up the points of law that I have heard."

"It isn't necessary for anything like that," spoke up Anna. "All you need do is listen to the charge made against the prisoner brought before you and hear what he has to say in defense. Then you simply pass judgment on him, and if you think him guilty, sentence him. It will be easy enough, I think."

"Oh, I guess I could manage it somehow," Arietta answered.

"Well, I will tell them at noon that it is all right,"

said Wild. "I suppose this would be as good a place as any to hold court."

"Yes, I want to be right here where the rest of you are," Arietta answered.

"Wing," our hero remarked, looking at the cook, "just get the dinner ready half an hour earlier to-day, will you. I want to be down around the saloons when the miners are coming to and from their dinner. I want to learn what they think about the vigilance committee and their judge."

"Allee light, Misler Wild," was the reply.

Our friends took things easy until the dinner was ready.

Just before they were called to it by the cook Wild looked over to the shanty Dutton occupied, which was less than a hundred yards distant, and saw quite a crowd gathering there.

He saw that they were the members of the vigilance committee, and he gave a nod of approval.

They went in and had dinner, and then Wild, Jim and Charlie went over to Dutton's.

By this time there were thirty miners there, and more were to be seen heading that way.

"Ther thing is started in earnest, Young Wild West," said Lige Booster, as he came to meet them. "Ther men is all settled on makin' a fight fur a good clean town. It is reported that a gang what calls themselves ther Oregon Outlaws, an' is proud ter be called thet, has come in town, an' that they're goin' ter take ther sides of ther bad gang an' clean things out. I reckon there's tough times ahead."

"Well, it won't last very long, Lige," retorted Wild in his cool and easy way. "You just keep cool, and if there's any shooting to be done be careful that you've got your man covered before you pull a trigger."

Dutton and the rest of the vigilantes gathered around them now.

"Young Wild West," said the former, "has Miss Arietta accepted the position of judge?"

"Yes," was the reply, "after thinking it over she has decided to accept, since it was unanimously offered to her. I will guarantee that she will do business in a fair and square way, too. She may not altogether suit you people in giving out sentences, for she don't believe in hanging a man unless he is a real murderer, and she knows it."

"Well, whatever she does will be accepted by the boys, an' I know it. They're all satisfied to have the girl for a judge, and you can bet all you're worth that she will be respected by them."

It was twelve o'clock now, and as the word had been passed among the honest men who had been at work when the committee had been organized, they were turning out in full force.

It had simply needed a spark to set them going.

They had been lacking in a leader, and now they knew they had one in Young Wild West.

Though the majority of them had never heard of our hero until he came to Seven Spot, they had been told of

how he had tamed Gil Griddle and the others, and that was enough to make them believe in him.

Griddle had long been feared by them, for he was what was called a bad, dangerous man.

The men kept on coming and in a few minutes fifty had gathered in front of Dutton's shanty.

"I guess here is enough to whip all the outlaws who ever came into Seven Spot," our hero exclaimed. "Now, then, I think it proper that you all go before the judge and be sworn in."

There was a cheer at this and a few minutes later they all marched over to the shanty where the fair judge sat.

Wild brought Arietta out and introduced her.

Then he told her to ask them to hold up their right hands and agree to abide by the judgment she rendered upon any case that might be brought before her.

"Gentlemen of Seven Spot," she said in a voice that had not the least quiver in it, "you have selected me to act as a judge, and I have accepted. But I want it thoroughly understood that under no circumstances will I change a decision after it is once given. If you will kindly hold up your right hands and agree to bear me out in this, and also to act upon any orders that I may give, I will swear you in as members of the Law and Order League of Seven Spot."

"Three cheers fur ther jedge!" shouted Lige Booster, waving his hat and jumping up and down like a delighted schoolboy.

Such a cheer went up as had never been heard in Seven Spot before.

The bad gang, which had selected one of the saloons for a temporary headquarters, heard it, and it must have made them do some thinking.

When order was restored Arietta swore them in, acting upon the authority they had invested in her.

Then they came up in single file and shook hands as they went past, and then Arietta felt that she was a full-fledged judge.

By a vote it was decided that no further work should be done until the town was purified, and as the men were now thoroughly worked up, it was certain that the bad gang and the outlaws who proposed to assist them, had the right of their life on their hands.

Arietta told Dutton that as he was the chairman of the committee, he had better write out a proclamation and post it where it could be seen and read by anybody in the town.

This was done.

The proclamation was not a very lengthy one and was simply to the effect that the honest citizens of Seven Spot had decided that things were going to be run straight there in the future, and that those who did not approve of this had better leave town at once.

Both Dutton and Arietta signed this in their official capacity, and then Young Wild West and Cheyenne Charlie agreed to take it down and tack it to the front of the supply store.

Wild knew there would likely be trouble if he did this, but he thought the sooner the real trouble began the quicker it would be over with.

Both he and Charlie ran the risk of getting shot, but they were willing to take it.

They both were quite certain that they were feared by the majority of the villains, and that gave them the idea that they would not be apt to be shot at in any sort of fashion.

The vigilantes were formed into fours and then they marched down into the heart of the town with the two who had been chosen to put up the proclamation.

All the men were armed.

A few had rifles, and they were ready to use them, too.

The saloon the bad element had chosen for a headquarters was nearly opposite the supply store, and before it were gathered thirty or forty men.

How many there were inside our friends did not know. Wild and Charlie were looking out for the Oregon Outlaws, whom they had heard were there to help in the fight.

They both felt they would be able to recognize some of them, for neither of them ever forgot a face.

The Law and Order League came to a halt near the store, and then Wild and Charlie stepped upon the little stoop and proceeded to talk among themselves.

After the two left the stoop and walked back to the crowd a rough looking fellow started across the street to have a look at the placard.

It was Wock, one of the Oregon Outlaws.

Wild and Charlie instantly recognized him as one of the gang, and they got ready for business.

The Oregon Outlaw stepped up and read the words of the proclamation aloud, so those across the street might hear it.

When he had concluded a yell went up from the villains.

"Tear it down, Wock!" called out a voice, which our friends recognized as belonging to Doc Dean, though they did not see him in the crowd.

The man obeyed instantly and the paper was torn into fragments and scattered to the wind.

"Hold up your hands, Mr. Oregon Outlaw!" cried Young Wild West in a ringing voice. "You are under arrest!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ARIETTA AS A JUDGE.

The words were scarcely out of the mouth of Young Wild West when revolvers flashed in the hands of several of the men who stood in front of the saloon.

This was the cue for the honest element to show their weapons.

More villains came surging from the saloon, and for the space of a minute it seemed that a fight could not be avoided.

But the rascally gang thought better of it, or rather the leaders did.

The fellow called Wock still stood on the stoop of the supply store, and he had his hands above his head.

He knew better than to try to get away when he saw the rifle in the hands of the dashing young deadshot was leveled straight at him.

"You are under arrest!" repeated Wild with emphasis. "Come here and give yourself up, or I will come and take you!"

Wock looked for help from his friends, but it did not come.

Then he did what any sensible man would have done—he stepped down and walked over to the band of vigilantes.

"We'll take him before the judge, boys!" cried Dutton, who was now one of the most aggressive of the Law and Order League.

The men took up the cry and the Oregon Outlaw was marched up the hill in double-quick time.

"What am I arrested fur?" the prisoner asked, looking at our hero with a very startled pair of eyes, and a face that was white as a sheet.

"For tearing down the proclamation," was the calm rejoinder.

A sigh of relief came from his lips.

Evidently he thought it was because he was one of the outlaw gang that had tried so hard to rob our friends.

"You are one of the Oregon Outlaws, are you not?" our hero asked, as they neared the shanty where Arietta was to sit as judge.

The villain's face fell.

He made no reply.

"Come! Speak up!" insisted Wild.

"I s'pose you know what I am," was the faint rejoinder.

"Yes, I know. So there's no need of you lying."

"I didn't do nothin' ter you or your friends."

"I know you didn't, but that was because you did not have the chance. But never mind. You are not going to be tried for that now; the judge will pass sentence on you for tearing the proclamation into pieces."

Again Wock looked relieved.

Arietta opened the door of the shanty as the crowd came up.

"Bring the prisoner inside," she said, calmly.

Wock looked at her in amazement.

He saw that the girl had a revolver in her hand and he wondered what was going to happen.

But one look at her beautiful face convinced him that she was not going to shoot him.

Charlie and Jim pushed their way inside, as did Dutton and Lige Booster.

Then came Wild and the two who were leading the prisoner.

The rest crowded around the open door and looked in at the windows.

Hop and Wing, the Chinamen, were interested spectators.

Arietta took a seat at the table and listened to the charge against the man.

He did not hesitate to plead guilty.

"Bring the prisoner forward," said Arietta.

The Oregon Outlaw was promptly forced up to the table.

"The sentence of the court is that you have got just twenty minutes to leave the camp!" came from the lips of the fair "judge."

A shout of approval went up from the men outside, and then Dutton turned to Wock and said:

"You've heard ther sentence, so you'd better make tracks."

The villain said not a word, but finding himself free, he hurriedly stepped out of the shanty and made for the saloon.

He had been given twenty minutes to leave Seven Spot, but the man had no intention of doing it.

"I'll leave when ther rest of ther gang does," he muttered, as he walked down the hill.

As he came in sight of the gang in front of the saloon a shout went up.

Wock waved his hat in triumph.

Doc Dean, who still wore the false beard, stepped out to meet him.

"What did they do to you?" he asked. "We were just thinking of coming up there and making a fight for you."

"Well, I was taken before ther jedge. It was charged that I tore ther placard from ther side of ther store an' I admitted it. Then ther gal told me that my sentence was that I had just twenty minutes ter git out of ther town. I lit out, an' here I am."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Doc Dean laughed heartily.

"So that was your sentence, eh?" he observed. "Well, that is the best I've heard in a good while. And they've got a girl for a judge, have they? Well, I am glad of that too. The first thing the girl will be missing from Seven Spot, and then they won't have any judge. Ha, ha ha!"

Wock quickly explained what had happened to him to the rest of the men gathered there.

Those who did not belong to the outlaw gang seemed to think that the best thing he could do would be to leave, as he had been told.

The fact was that the bad element were beginning to think that they did not stand much of a show in the town, since they had seen so many of the miners take the side of Young Wild West.

The proclamation had really made quite an impression on them.

"If it was me I'd go," said the Stinger, as he went inside and stood at the bar.

"I reckon you had jest enough experience with Young

Wild West ter know what he is," answered the barkeeper, as he grinned at the swollen face of the defeated fighter.

"That's right," admitted the Stinger. "I ain't ashamed ter say it, either. But ye kin gamble on it that if I couldn't whip Young Wild West, there's no one in this blamed town kin!"

The saloon man did not offer to contradict this statement.

"And he made Gil Griddle look about as sick as any tenderfoot what ever struck ther West," went on the Stinger. "Who'd have thought anyone would have done that ter him?"

"An' who'd have thought that Gambler Dick was goin' ter be fetched down, like he was?" added the saloon keeper. "Stinger, I know that what you say is ther truth, but yer do look awful comical like with that battered face of yours!"

Doc Dean came in just then.

His face wore a look of confidence.

"This man, whose name is Wock, is a friend of mine," he remarked, pointing to the late prisoner. "He is not going to leave the camp, as the girl judge told him to do. He is going to stay right here."

"An' git a dose of hot lead fur doin' so," added the Stinger.

"Do you think that way?" and the Oregon Outlaw looked at him angrily.

"Yes, I think that way, an' I think I've got good reasons ter think that way, too."

"Why I can pick out ten men from the crowd around here and go up there and clean that gang out!"

"No, yer can't, Gambler Dick! What's ther use of talkin' like that? I'll bet my claim ag'in a thousand dollars that yer can't pick out ten men that will lick Young Wild West an' his two pards!"

"You seem to think that because Young Wild West thrashed you within an inch of your life that he could do the same to me?" retorted the outlaw, hotly.

"I reckon he made yer drop yer feathers putty quick, didn't he?"

"He wouldn't have got the best of me if that tall, lanky partner of his hadn't grabbed my hand when he did."

"You was goin' ter put a bullet in ther boy without givin' him a show, wasn't yer?"

"Certainly I was. Wouldn't you have done the same thing if you had the chance?"

"No! I ain't built exactly that way. Young Wild West showed me that I had no business with him, an' that settled it! If yer want ter know ther truth about it, I think a whole lot of that young feller, jest because he give me ther worst thrashin' I ever had in my life. I didn't know that I could be whipped in a fist fight like that! I've been doin' some mighty tall thinkin' ever since, an' I've come ter ther decision that I've learned somethin' an' that I oughter be much obliged ter ther one what learned me."

"You're a fool!" hissed the outlaw.

"No I ain't no fool, Gambler Dick," retorted the Stinger, stepping up to him. "My eyes ain't in ther best condition ter see, but I ain't afraid of you, even if you have got ten good fighters behind you. I can't whip Young Wild West, but I kin whip you in a fight with fists!"

"Start right in, then!"

As Doc Dean said this he jerked a revolver from his belt and covered the man.

Whack!

If he had not been very much angered just then it is hardly likely that the Stinger would have dared to try and knock the shooter from the villain's hand, but he did try it, and he succeeded, too.

The revolver struck the floor clear across the room.

Spat!

The Stinger's fist hit the Oregon Outlaw squarely between the eyes and down he went in a heap.

"I kin lick all ther Gambler Dicks a prairie schooner would hold!" the young miner cried.

Crack!

A pistol shot sounded from the door and a bullet cut a lock of hair from his head.

One of the outlaws had fired the shot, and he came rushing inside, the smoking weapon raised to fire again.

Crack!

But the Stinger had dropped in time to save himself. The lesson our hero had taught him seemed to make a different man of him, even in his way of fighting.

He lunged forward and knocked the revolver from the outlaw's hand as neatly and quickly as anyone could have done it.

But the villain meant him, and he quickly pulled a knife he always carried.

The Stinger stepped back and did the same.

Clash—clash!

The blades came together with a ring, while those in the saloon formed a circle.

Doc Dean had been knocked senseless by the blow he had received and had failed to come to yet.

Two of his followers dragged him to the room in the rear and worked away in their efforts to revive him.

But to the fight!

The Stinger was plainly the best man in that line of business, and he was not long in proving it.

He gave the outlaw his death wound in short order, for he was really a man who thought it would be foolish to spare the fellow's life.

That is the way of it at the mines.

If he had spared the life of the Oregon Outlaw his own would have been taken the first time the villain got the opportunity to fire a sly shot at him.

By killing him he made the others have a feeling of both fear and respect for him.

Some of them had already drawn their revolvers, for they noticed the threatening attitude of the outlaws.

But it did not come to a fight.

Doc Dean's men realized that they could gain nothing

by getting in a row with the miners, for they were known to be outlaws by them, and should the miners take a change and go over to the side of Young Wild West they would be in a bad fix.

The thing was soon smoothed over and the body of the outlaw removed by his friends.

By this time Doc Dean had recovered, and when he came out in the bar room he came without the blonde beard, for it had been removed by his friends while they bathed his face to restore him to consciousness.

Wock had told him just how things stood, and the captain knew that it would not do for him to look for revenge upon the Stinger just then.

He was pretty badly muddled as he came out, but he knew what was going on, for all that.

"Everybody come up and have a drink!" he exclaimed, bringing his hand heavily upon the bar. "You are going to drink with Gambler Dick and Doc Dean, the captain of the Oregon Outlaws, both at the same time, for they are one and the same person!"

Several of the miners did not know this.

Consequently they were very much puzzled.

But when his false beard was handed him, and he put it on again, they understood.

Wock proposed three cheers for the captain, but only two or three of the miners joined the outlaws in giving the cheer.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WILD FALLS INTO THE OUTLAWS' DEN.

Young Wild West knew pretty well that the prisoner would not do as he had been told by Arietta.

But he meant to see to it that he either went or was brought before the judge again.

"I think I'll go and find out what the fellow is up to," he said, when the twenty minutes was up, and they did not see him come out of the saloon. "I remember the fellow. He is the one I heard come back and report to Doc Dean last night that he had spied on our camp. Wock was the name the captain of the outlaws called him. Now I will go and do a little spying, for I am anxious to know just what the villains are up to."

There was a grove of tall cedars that extended from the rear of the shanty all the way to the little pass they had come through when they entered the town.

Wild figured that if he got among the trees and worked his way along for a couple of hundred yards he would have a much better view of what was going on down in the thicker settled part.

Leaving the rest at the shanty, he made his way back among the cedars and proceeded along until he got to the point he had picked out as the one to make his observations from.

Then he stepped to the edge of the trees and looked down into the level below.

It was at that moment that he saw ten men leave the saloon and head for the pass.

As they were on foot, he knew that they could not be going very far.

The instant he saw them he recognized them as being the fellow called Gambler Dick and the Oregon Outlaws.

The villain who had been sentenced to leave the camp was with them, and it occurred to our hero that he might be going to leave now, and that the others were going a short distance with him to see him off.

But it was hardly likely that he would be going on foot, so that made him think that they were heading for the camp that the outlaws must have somewhere close by.

Wild started in the same direction they were following, only he kept himself concealed by the trees.

A couple of minutes later he saw a shanty that was built upon the top of a big rock.

It was no other than the one occupied by Handy, the trapper, who lived over the outlaws' retreat.

To Wild it looked just as though the rudely constructed building was erected right upon the top of a solid rock.

Of course it never occurred to him just then that there was anything wrong about the shanty.

"If they all go in that little place I guess they will have to stand up, for it won't hold as many as ten stools or chairs, by the looks of it," he muttered.

He moved along quickly, but noiselessly, and was soon in a clump of bushes less than fifty yards from the little shanty.

Wild had scarcely got there when Gambler Dick came up to the door of the shanty, followed by the nine villains.

The door was opened just then by Handy, and then, much to the surprise of the boy, the men went in one at a time until all were there.

Then the door was closed.

"That is what I call pretty good!" he exclaimed under his breath. "So this is where the Oregon Outlaws are stopping, is it? Well, I am anxious to see what they the doing in that little place. I guess I could manage to reach that window in the end of the building. By Jove! I am going to try it, anyhow. If they discover me they will wish they had not, probably."

He took another look at the front of the building to make sure that the men were not coming out right away, and then he started to make his way around to a point where he would be able to approach the window without being seen by those inside.

This was easy enough to do, since he soon found that there was no window in the rear.

When Young Wild West started to do a thing of this kind he always kept right on till it was done.

In less than three minutes from the time he made the resolution to go to the window he was right there.

He knew it would be dangerous for him to raise his

head and take a look inside, but he had to take the risk now, or else it would be for naught that he had come there.

After listening for a moment, and hearing nothing more than someone moving about the interior of the shanty, he raised his head and looked through the cracked and dirty window pane.

He only took one quick glance and then lowered his head again.

But that one quick glance was sufficient to show him that there was only one man in the shanty!

Young Wild West was a very puzzled boy just then.

He was satisfied that there could be but one room to the little building.

And he had seen ten men go in, as the eleventh opened the door for them.

It was the eleventh man who was inside now, but the ten had vanished!

Wild took another look.

Handy was working away scraping a skin with a rag and bit of glass.

To all appearances he was a sort of hermit and one who did not care to associate with his fellow men.

Wild had met hermit trappers in his travels and this fellow reminded him of one of them.

It occurred to him that the villains had gone out of the place about as fast as they had gone in.

He took another look and quickly satisfied himself that there was no other door in the building than the one they had entered.

That being the case there was but one conclusion for him to draw.

There must be a cellar beneath the shanty, and they had gone down into it.

This was quite easy for him to imagine, for there really was no other way that they could have left the place.

The thatched roof was there in plain sight, so they could not have gone up through that.

The more Wild thought about the thing the more anxious he became to solve the mystery.

He took another look in the window.

The hunter sat with his back toward him, scraping away at the skin and whistling an old-fashioned tune.

Wild lowered his head and then crept around to the rear of the shanty.

The sound of a waterfall came to his ears.

There was nothing surprising in this, but something told him to go and have a look at the fall.

There were plenty of bushes and cedars to conceal him, should any of the gang that had so strangely disappeared be looking that way.

But he proceeded with the utmost caution, not relying on the fact that he was not apt to be seen, but thinking that he might be heard if he made a suspicious sound.

Moving along slowly he suddenly felt that he was upon something that was not the solid ground.

He paused and made a move to step back into the ce-

dars he had just emerged from when a startling thing happened.

Something turned under his foot and the next instant the leafy bed parted under him and he shot downward!

The agile boy landed on his feet ten feet below, and as he recovered his balance, found himself right into the midst of the outlaws he had seen enter the hut.

As quick as he was at pulling a shooter, he was seized by two men before he even made a move to do it.

This was probably owing to the fact that the surprise at dropping through upon them was great enough to stop him from acting in his usual form.

With his arms caught and held firmly, Young Wild West could do nothing.

Others came to the assistance of the two who had caught him, and then he was quickly bound.

"Well," said a familiar voice and then Doc Dean stepped up and gave the helpless boy a kick. "So you thought you would not wait for us to come to you, and you came to us, eh? That is very obliging of you, Young Wild West, I must say."

"Well, I didn't intend to drop among you the way I did," coolly Wild answered.

It was evident that the Oregon Outlaws did not expect to hear anything like this.

They looked at each other wonderingly.

Why it was that the boy could be so cool and unconcerned they did not know.

One thing was certain. They felt that he must know that they would never permit him to leave the place alive.

"You're the worst bluffer I ever met, Young Wild West," said Doc Dean, after a pause. "You may be as cool as you make out you are, but I have my doubts about it. Don't you know that you have got to die?"

"We have all got to come to that," retorted our hero, realizing that the impression he had made was no mean one.

"Yes, but you have got to die pretty soon. Ha, ha, ha! If this is not great luck for the Oregon Outlaws my name isn't Doc Dean, alias Gambler Dick!"

Wild was not surprised to hear him admit he was no other than the villain who had been stopped from shooting him by Cheyenne Charlie.

He was certain that Gambler Dick, as he was called in Seven Spot, was in some way connected with the outlaws when he saw them all leaving the saloon.

"Say!" said Wock, stepping up and giving him a kick, the same as the captain had done; "I didn't leave the camp in twenty minutes, did I, Young Wild West?"

"You will wish you had before you are many hours older," was the retort.

Though it angered him to be kicked while in the helpless condition Wild kept cool as an iceberg.

"That gal of yours what you made a jedge of is great on givin' sentences ter prisoners, but one thing is ter give ther sentence an' another is ter see that it is carried out."

"The next time you come before the judge you will

have the sentence carried out," retorted Wild. "That is, if you live to be taken before her."

"Why, yer think I'm goin' ter die very soon, do yer?"

Wock laughed as though it was a great joke when he asked the question.

"You are liable to, I think."

Doc Dean now had a consultation with his men.

After quite a little talk, during which nearly every man of them expressed his opinion, it was decided that Young Wild West should be put to death by having a stone tied about his neck and then thrown into the deep pool at the foot of the falls.

Wild heard the decision without a change of expression.

But when he heard Doc Dean say a moment later that it would be better to wait until dark before the murder was committed a thrill of joy shot through the boy.

They were giving him the chance that he wanted, for he felt that his partners would find where he was before that time.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE STINGER GOES WITH CHARLIE IN SEARCH OF WILD.

Arietta was rather anxious when Wild started off.

"I hope he don't get into trouble single-handed with the outlaws," she said.

"Well, so long as they don't catch him by some trick it won't matter much whether he does or not," Jim Dart retorted. "Wild will take care of himself, so long as he can face them."

All hands were keeping a watch on the part of the little town that lay below them.

Soon after Wild's departure they saw the party of ten leaving the saloon.

They knew they were the Oregon Outlaws, for Charlie and Jim had no difficulty in recognizing them.

Five minutes after they left three men were seen coming up the hill.

"Thunder!" exclaimed the scout. "I reckon somethin's goin' ter happen! Here comes that young feller what Wild give sich a beatin' to, an' there's a couple of ther galoots what was stickin' up fur him comin' with him. I wonder what they're after?"

"I guess they have got enough of it, and that they have made up ther minds to come and join the Law and Order League," retorted Dart with a laugh.

"There may be a whole lot of truth in what you say, Jim," spoke up Arietta.

The three men came on up the hill, and when they got to the shanty of Dutton they stopped.

Some of the miners who had joined in the revolt against the outlaws and bad gang were there and the rest were gathered at the neighboring shanties.

They saw the Stinger go to the door, and when Dutton

came out a moment later he had a very spirited talk with him, during which he made several motions to show how earnest he was.

The two miners with him nodded every now and then, showing that they heartily agreed to what he was saying.

The result was that a few minutes later Dutton and Lige Booster came over with the three to the shanty and asked for the judge to kindly step to the door.

Arietta did so, fully satisfied that the men had come to join the movement against the evil doers of the town.

She made no mistake in thinking this way, for taking off his hat, the bruised and battered young miner said:

"Judge, I've come up ter tell yer that me an' these two galoots has made up our minds that good is better than bad. Young Wild West give me a good lickin' an' when he done it he knocked some sense in my head. I'm a putty decent sort of a galoot, an' always was, but I've got my faults. I had an idea that I could lick about any galoot that come over ther trail, but I found out I made a mistake. If you'll jest swear me in as a member of ther gang what has been got up with Dutton as president, I'll show yer that I kin be a good deal better friend than I kin a foe."

"Very well," answered Arietta, "hold up your right hand."

The three obeyed promptly enough.

They repeated the promise after her and then she declared them to be full-fledged members of the Law and Order League.

"Thank you miss—jedge, I mean," said the Stinger. "Now we'll go back, an' if we don't send about all ther decent galoots in town ter jine afore night it'll be 'cause I ain't got no pull. It's a blame sight better ter live honest than it is ter play ther part of the rogue, when yer ain't one. I never was a thief, or anything like that, but I've been what yer might call a bad galoot, what didn't care whether school kept or not."

They went on back, and then it was not long before the Stinger was seen coming back with a dozen men after him.

"I reckon there ain't goin' ter be an awful lot of trouble with ther bad men of Seven Spot, anyhow," observed Cheyenne Charlie, shrugging his shoulders.

"Here's some more what thinks ther best way ter do it is ter run ther blamed old town straight," called out the Stinger, before he got up close to them.

"All right," answered Jim; "I guess they're doing the right thing." The miners looked rather sheepish when they came up, but Arietta spoke in such a pleasant manner that they were completely won, and they began to wonder why they went against Young Wild West and his friends.

When they had all declared their intentions to stand for law and order, the men went back.

"I reckon about ther only galoot what won't come is Gil Griddle, an' ther reason he won't is 'cause he's ashamed ter," said the Stinger, as he was leaving.

"Well, he's a harmless galoot, anyhow," answered the scout. "If he don't come around ter our way of thinkin' it won't make much difference, anyhow."

About half an hour later another batch of the miners came forward and declared for law and order.

Arietta felt that a great triumph had been scored.

As far as the real inhabitants of the town were concerned, everything was all right.

The Oregon Outlaws were all they had to contend with now.

But when Wild had been gone the girl began to feel uneasy about him.

So did Charlie and Jim.

The scout turned to Arietta a few minutes later and observed:

"Yes, Charlie; that is a good idea. It might be that he has got into trouble with the outlaws."

"Me likee go to um store," spoke up Hop Wah just then; "me havee buy some sugee."

"I guess there ain't no one down there what will bother yer now," answered Charlie. "Yer kin go with me, an' I'll give it out that you're our Chinaman, so ther galoots down there won't take a notion ter shoot your pig-tail off, or anything like that."

"I guess Hop thinks he needs a little stimulant," Jim remarked with a smile.

"Well, let him git a drink if he wants ter," retorted the scout. "I'm goin' ter have one myself, an' then I'm goin' ter find out where Wild is."

Jim wanted to give Hop the money to get the sugar with, but the Celestial declared that he had some money left from what Wild had given him.

So he set out with Cheyenne Charlie down the hill, and as he saw his brother getting further away from the shanty, Wing shook his head and said:

"My blother velly muchee telle lie; plenty sugee in box; he wantee lum, no sugee."

All knew this was about the size of it, so there was simply a smile at Wing's remark.

Charlie and Hop went on down to the nearest saloon and walked in.

There were but few there, for nearly all the men had gone to work now.

No one offered to interfere with either Charlie or the Chinaman, so they got a drink apiece, and then the scout told Hop to go and get his sugar.

"Alle light," was the reply, and he went over to the store, leaving the scout talking to the Stinger, who came along just then.

"Where do yer think them galoots what calls themselves ther Oregon Outlaws went?" Charlie asked the young miner.

"They ginnerally hang around somewhere's near the shanty of Handy, ther trapper," was the reply. "Gambler Dick always stops with ther old man, an' he's awful thick with that gang, what's got as many as half a dozen sheriffs after it, but can't catch 'em."

"Where's ther shanty of ther trapper?" the scout queried.

"Do you want to go there?"

"I don't want ter go there exactly, but somewhere around there. I'm lookin' fur Young Wild West."

"Why, where did Young Wild West go?"

The Stinger was very much interested.

Charlie thought the young man was all right, so he told him all about it.

And the Stinger was all right, too. There was nothing of the hypocrite style about him.

The thrashing he had received had really made a man of him, for it taught him, among other things, that an honest, straight man is more thought of than one who is not.

"Let me go with yer," he said to Charlie. "I reckon I know more about ther lay of ther land around here than you do. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Young Wild West has got in ther clutches of them Oregon Outlaws. He might have run right inter their camp afore he knowed it. I happen ter know that they wanted ter down him awful bad, so I hope he ain't got caught by 'em. If he has it won't do much good ter find him, fur he'll be dead, most likely."

The scout shrugged his shoulders.

"Sartin you kin go," he said. "But I wouldn't believe that Wild was dead, not until I seen his body with my own eyes an' made sure of it."

The Stinger was anything but handsome, with his battered face, but he did not seem to mind it much.

He could see well enough to go anywhere, and he was really anxious to do a good turn for Young Wild West.

"Come on," he said, as he examined his big six-shooter to see if it was properly loaded. "I reckon that Young Wild West oughter found where them Oregon Outlaws went long afore this. I don't know jest where they are, but I'm sartin that they ain't fur from ther shanty of Handy."

"Good enough!" exclaimed the scout. "We'd better git around there so we won't be seen by ther galoots as we come."

"Yes, we'll go up ther hill ter your shanty, an' then strike inter ther cedars. It's only a short walk from there ter ther shanty of ther trapper."

Leaving the Chinaman in the store, Charlie went back up the hill with the Stinger.

Jim and the girls came out of the shanty as they approached.

They did not know what to make of it to see Charlie coming back with the miner.

But they were quickly told what was up and then they looked serious.

The Stinger looked so anxious that he set them to worrying.

"We'll find him all right," Charlie assured them, for nothing could make the scout feel that Wild was not all right, even if he had met the outlaws.

His words cheered them, so when he set out Arietta called out:

"If you don't find Wild by the time it begins to grow dark I will have a try and see what I can do."

"Well, you have found him when he's been missin' after me an' Jim has give it up," was the retort. "But I reckon we'll be back with him afore it gits dark. We've got over an hour ter work in."

The two searchers went off around the rear of the building and were soon lost to view among the cedars.

As he knew just where he was going, the Stinger was not long in getting in sight of the hut of Handy, the hunter

"There's where Gambler Dick always hangs out when he's in town," said the miner, nodding in the direction of the little building, "an' as he an' Doc Dean is one an' ther same, it must be that his gang ain't fur away from here."

"So Gambler Dick an' Doc Dean is one an' ther same, hey?" Charlie asked.

"Yes, I had a little trouble with him in ther Slasher saloon, an' after I put him ter sleep an' shot one of his men, he come out with them blonde whiskers of his missin' an' said as how he was Doc Dean."

"Well I was sartin that he was one of ther Oregon Outlaws. But I didn't hardly think that he was ther same galoot what called himself Doc Dean. If you licked him an' shot one of his men ther chances is that he would like ter git hold of yer."

"Yes, I sorter reckon that he would. But I ain't goin' ter let him, not if I kin help it."

As neither of them wished their presence known in the vicinity, they proceeded with a great deal of caution.

The Stinger was a little clumsy in his movements, but the scout held him down pretty well.

They crawled around to the rear of the house the first thing.

It was quite natural for them to do this, since they found that there was no window in that part of it.

"There's a waterfall here, hey?" said the scout in a whisper.

"Yes, I reckon so," was the retort, "I ain't never been close to it, though."

"I thought you knowed all about this part of ther country. Why, I reckon that a waterfall is jest ther place where a camp would likely be, 'cause ther noise of ther fallin' water would drown any noise that was made, providin' that a gang didn't want it ter be known that they were there. We'll go an' look at the waterfall, fur it's putty sartin that there ain't no ten outlaws in that little shanty."

The Stinger nodded.

"I'll leave it ter you," he said. "You know what you're doin'."

They moved cautiously through the cedars and undergrowth and soon reached the side of the falls that came

tumbling from the rocks above and landed into a boiling pool something like twenty feet below them.

Charlie looked down, holding fast to a tree, so he might lean over, as he did so.

He saw a man getting a pail of water down there, and as he returned to walk away with it he recognizezd him as Wock, the Oregon Outlaw who had been given twenty minutes to get out of the town.

## CHAPTER XI.

### HOP DOES A TRICK OR TWO.

Hop Wah came out of the store as soon as Charlie and the Stinger started up the hill.

Hop had the sugar he had made the excuse to come for, and he meant to take it back to the shanty with him when he got ready to go.

But he was not ready to go just yet.

He felt in the humor to have a little more tanglefoot.

And if anyone wanted to play a little game of draw poker he was ready for that.

The Chinaman looked up and down the narrow, crooked street that ran through the center of the camp, which the inhabitants insisted on calling a town, and selected the saloon that the bad element had chosen as a headquarters as the place to stop in this time.

He walked over to it and entered with a bland smile on his face and the three pound package of brown sugar under his left arm.

"Howee do, evelybody?" he said, pleasantly to the three or four men in the saloon.

One of them was Gil Griddle, and when he saw Hop he looked anxiously at the door, as though he expected to see Young Wild West and his partners enter.

The blustering bad man had had quite enough of them, and he did not mean to get into any more rows with them.

But they did not come in, so when Hop smilingly invited the boys to step up and have a drink with him he got up and moved to the bar with the rest.

"You're what I calls a putty decent Chineez," observed the man who ran the saloon. "It ain't many heathens what has got sense enough ter ask decent folks ter drink with him."

"Me alle samee likee Melican man; me bully boy with um glassez eye," answered Hop, smiling sweetly.

There were just four there, including the proprietor, and they drank with him and wished him good health.

The celestial paid the bill, placing his sugar on the counter as he went into his pocket for the money.

"What have yer got in ther paper?" Gil Griddle asked in a friendly way.

"Me gotte sugzee," was the reply.

"Fur your people up at ther shanty, I reckon?"

"Yes, Missy Alietta, allee samee Judge, send me after um sugée."

The saloon keeper's eyes twinkled as he looked at the package.

Hop had pushed it to one end of the bar and was now paying no attention to it.

It occurred to the man that since the better element had triumphed in Seven Spot, with the exception of cleaning out the outlaws, it would not be out of the way to play a joke on the Chinaman and the "judge" who had sent him after the sugar.

Leaving Hop talking to Griddle, he beckoned to one of the other men and sent him over to the store with instructions to get some salt to about the same amount as there was sugar in the package.

"I'll change it on ther heathen, an' then there'll be some fun up at Young Wild West's shanty when they go ter sweeten their coffee," he whispered.

But though he said this in a whisper, the sharp ears of the Celestial heard the words.

But never once did Hop let on that he did.

That was not his way.

He was a born joker, anyhow, and he did not mean that they should get the best of him in the saloon.

He started in to tell Griddle a story about his uncle, who was a great mandarin in China, and he kept the story going until the man came back and the packages were changed.

But never once did he appear to look toward the part of the counter he had placed his sugar on.

The saloon man felt so much tickled over the trick he had played that he treated all hands.

Hop swallowed his tanglefoot and smacked his lips.

Then he looked at the package on the counter and said:

"Lat be alle light; me wantee go back to store; me forgittee matches."

"Sartin it will be all right," was the reply.

Hop went over and bought just about enough flour to make a package the size of the three pounds of sugar.

As the storekeeper was about to tie it up he took the bag from him and asked for the string.

"Me tie lup," he said. "Me wantee puttee in something."

"All right," was the reply, and the man took the bill he offered him and proceeded to make the change.

While he was doing this Hop slyly pushed a big firecracker down in the flour and then carefully tied up the package, leaving the stem protruding right where the knot in the string was made.

There was nothing strange about the Chinaman having a firecracker in his possession, for he always carried such things.

He was a sleight-of-hand performer, and such things came in handy to do his tricks sometimes.

The package of flour would be easily taken for the one

that had been substituted for the sugar, since the bags were exactly the same.

The coat or gown that an ordinary Chinaman wears is a rather peculiar garment, as anyone will admit.

Hop's had so many pockets in it that he could put his hand under it anywhere and bring out something.

He had a pocket large enough to hold the three-pound bag.

He dropped it into it and then started for the saloon.

When he got back he noticed that the inmates were doing some grinning, but he did not ask what the trouble was.

What he wanted to do now was to put the package he had on the counter in place of the one that was now there.

When he did this he would stop the grin that was on the faces of each man in a hurry.

He proposed to make them turn white, as it were.

Walking over to the partition at the rear of the room, he made a mark on it.

"Me showee lilee tlick," he said. "You watchee mark and me makee flower comee out of wall."

They all put their eyes on the mark and then Hop stepped back and quietly changed the packages.

Then he walked back to the wall and apparently pulled a paper flower from it.

As he had the flower up his sleeve at the time it was easy enough for him to do it.

But it was mystifying to the men, just the same.

"That's what I calls blamed good!" declared the proprietor. "Kin yer do any more tricks?"

Hop remained thoughtful for a moment.

"Me putty goodee magic in China," he said, slowly.

"Me makee sugée turn into snow, allee samee wind blowee likee evelyt'ing!"

"Yer kin make sugar turn inter snow, yer say?" repeated Gil Griddle.

"Yes," and without anything further, he hastened to get the package from the bar and placed it on the floor in the center of the room.

The saloon keeper could not help laughing, and when he started in the other three caught it from him.

Hop looked at them innocently, but did not ask what caused their mirth.

"Me makee bigee snow-storm; allee comee oncee!" he exclaimed, nodding and looking serious. "Um sugée turnee to snow."

"Go ahead!" cried the proprietor, holding his hand over his mouth to check his laughter. "Let's see what you're goin' ter do."

"Me lightee piece of cord, and then when sugée burn, sugée turn to bigee snow-storm; so be."

Quickly striking a match, he applied it to the protruding stem of the firecracker.

"You watchee putty close, or you no see," he cautioned, and then as they leaned over the package he quietly slipped into the back room.

Bang!

Then came a series of frightened cries, and as Hop looked into the room it was so full of flying flour that he could not see the four men, at all.

"Lat putty goodee tlick," he called out, as he passed out by the rear door of the saloon; "me comee back by and by and lookee for um sugee."

It was several minutes before the four men could see.

The flour had got into their eyes, as well as their noses, mouths, and ears. When they did get out into the open air Hop Wah was nowhere to be seen.

"I reckon ther Chinees was too much fur yer," said Gil Griddle to the proprietor.

"I should reckon so," was the reply. "Talkin' about your magic! Why, that heathen galoot could make a fortune at ther game!"

Hop went into the next saloon, and after buying himself a bottle of tanglefoot went on up the hill.

He was perfectly satisfied with his trip to the store.

But he knew he had salt instead of sugar, so it made no difference.

The Chinaman found Jim and the girls in a very anxious frame of mind.

Then he got serious himself and began to think of some way to help them out.

They were worried about Wild being away, he knew.

"Me havee go lookee for Misler Wild," he exclaimed under his breath. "Me findee, maybe."

So a few minutes later he left the shanty, following the direction he had seen Wild take when he left.

The only weapons he had were a big six-shooter and a knife.

But he had several more of the fire-crackers, like the one he had used to explode the bag of flour, and if needs be he could use them.

Hop continued through the growth of cedars until he came to the shanty that was occupied by Handy.

He had no idea that the outlaws were there, so he decided to see who was there.

He went boldly to the door and knocked.

"What do yer want, yer heathen?" came from inside, and then the door swung open and the ally of the Oregon Outlaws appeared.

"You see Young Wild West?" queried Hop, as he pushed his way inside and took the first seat he saw.

Handy looked at him in surprise and anger combined.

"What's that yer say?" he demanded, roughly.

"You see Young Wild West?" Hop repeated, smiling blandly.

"I don't know ther galoot," was the retort.

"Len you no see him?"

"See here! What do yer want in here, anyhow?"

"Me settie down; have lillee lest," answered the Celestial, smiling at the irate man.

Handy acted as though he did not know whether to put him out or not.

But he decided not to, for he went and got a stool and sat down near him.

"Got any money?" he asked, suddenly.

"Me gottee lillee," Hop answered.

"Give it ter me, then!"

"Whattie for?"

"Well, anyone what comes in my shanty has ter pay fur ther privilege, see?"

Hop shook his head.

"Me no see," he retorted.

"I reckon you're about as big a fool Chinees as I ever seen!" declared the rascally hunter.

Hop knew what he was after, and it struck him that it might be that he was not on the trail of his missing boss.

He pulled out a handful of silver.

"Lat allee money me gottee," he remarked in his childish way.

"Well, give it ter me."

"Me no havee any money, len."

Hop shook his head and put the money back in his pocket.

Then he calmly pulled a black cigar from a pocket and struck a match.

Handy looked daggers at him.

It was plain that the man wanted to rob him, but did not like to go at it too roughly.

Hop got the cigar going good and then he pulled out a firecracker, taking care to keep it concealed under his flowing sleeve.

He held the fuse between his thumb and forefinger, and presently he lighted it from his cigar.

As the stem began to hiss he dropped the cracker on the floor and then arose.

"Me havee go now," he said, moving for the door.

Handy drew a revolver from his belt.

"No, yer don't!" he cried. "You've got er—"

Bang!

The villain fell over backward and Hop darted out of the shanty.

At that very moment the cracking of revolvers sounded from beneath the hut.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCLUSION.

Young Wild West was not bothered by the outlaws for some little time.

He was helpless, so he had to decline where they had placed him and make the best of it.

He listened to their talk and it was not long before he became convinced that the majority of the villains were for disposing of him before night.

A little over an hour after he had been captured Doc

Dean gave in to the majority and declared that they might as well drown the boy right away, and have done with it.

It was just then that Wock picked up a pail and started for the foot of the little waterfall to get some water.

When he came back the captain informed him that they might as well dispose of Young Wild West.

"The boys seem to think that it is dangerous to keep him any longer," he said, "as his partners might come and find our quarters here. Anything to please my men, you know. So Young Wild West goes to his doom! Get a good stone ready to tie it around his neck, some of you!"

There were plenty who were willing to do this, for they were all eager to get rid of the boy, whom they considered was their most dangerous enemy.

Wild nerved himself for a desperate ordeal.

He had been expecting to hear from Charlie or Jim before this.

And he did not despair to their coming yet.

"You had better change your minds and let me go," he said, as Wock and another of the outlaws dragged him toward the pool.

"I reckon we'd be fools ter do that," was the retort.

"Well, you will be sorry if you don't."

"That won't be nothin' ter you, 'cause yer won't be alive ter know it," laughed Wock.

The whole crowd followed to the foot of the falls.

The pool was not a very large one, but there was no doubt but that it was quite deep, since the constant fall of the water must have hollowed it out.

The stone was tied about the neck of Young Wild West and then everything was ready for the horrible crime to be committed.

Wild had not been gagged, and he meant to let out a loud shout for help when the outlaws picked him up to throw him into the pool.

The villains now began to taunt him.

"Just imagine how happy the fair 'judge' will be when she becomes my wife," said Doc Dean, as he leaned over the helpless boy and laughed sardonically.

"That will never be!" was the calm retort. "You—"  
Bang!

It was the explosion of Hop Wah's firecracker that they heard, and the Oregon Outlaws looked at each other in dismay.

They turned pale, to a man, and the face of Young Wild West brightened.

The daring young deadshot knew that his friends were at hand.

He thought of Hop Wah right away, and as the explosion came from the shanty overhead, he thought it was done to draw the outlaws that way.

Such was not the case, but it did it, just the same.

With drawn revolvers, the Oregon Outlaws rushed back under the shanty.

They left Young Wild West lying on the ground at the edge of the pool, the stone around his neck.

Just then Wild happened to glance up toward the top of the falls.

He saw two men coming down the rocky descent, and one of them was Cheyenne Charlie.

They were at the edge of the pool almost as soon as the outlaws got under the shanty.

"Jest in time, hey, Wild?" said the scout in a whisper, as he darted over and cut the boy's bonds and relieved him of the stone that had been intended to hold him to the bottom of the pool.

"Right on the minute!" was the reply.

Wild was surprised to see that the Stinger was Charlie's companion.

But there was no time to comment on it now.

Crack—crack—crack!

Charlie handed Wild a shooter and they answered the shots in a hurry.

Then all three started to climb the rocks.

"Come on, you scoundrels!" shouted Young Wild West, defiantly. "Those who don't want to come before the judge, just show themselves!"

Crack—crack—crack!

They fired again at the outlaws, who now seemed to be demoralized.

Bang!

Another explosion sounded in the shanty above.

Wild, Charlie and the Stinger scrambled up the rocks and soon reached the top.

Then they ran around so they could get a view of the front of the hut.

Hop Wah was dancing about like a lunatic before the open door.

The Celestial had so frightened the rascally hunter that he had opened the trap and gone down below.

Wild rushed up and caught Hop by the arm.

"What are you doing?" he cried.

"Makee bad man scaree, allee samee sickee coyote," was the reply. "Oh, Misler Wild! me velly glad you allee light!"

A crashing in the bushes sounded just then, and turning, our friends saw Dutton and Lige Booster coming with a crowd of the vigilantes at their back.

"Whoop! Wow!" yelled Lige Boster. "Ther jedge wanted us ter take a hand in ther search fur Young Wild West, an' we started out. Here he is, boys!"

"That's right," answered Wild, "and we've got the Oregon Outlaws cornered, too. They have either got to die fighting or go before the judge to be tried."

Just then Handy came out of the shanty.

He had been sent up by the outlaws to try and make the men go away.

Hop no sooner saw him than he produced another firecracker.

He still had the black cigar in his mouth, so he quickly lighted it and let it go into the hut.

Bang!

This time Handy leaped out of the building, instead of going down through the trap.

The men was badly frightened, especially when he saw the crowd of men there.

He turned and went down to the covered entrance of the outlaws' retreat, and pulling it aside, got out of sight in a hurry.

But our friends saw the action and a howl went up from the miners.

The men, elated with their victory over the bad element of the camp, were ready for anything now, and with one accord they rushed for the entrance.

Their knives slashed the canvas into ribbons and then the outlaws were disclosed to view.

Only two or three shots were fired by them, for the volley they got from the miners killed or wounded nearly all of them.

Doc Dean received a bullet in the calf of his leg which brought him down, and he at once yelled for quarter.

Wock was one of the three outlaws who did not get hurt.

As he walked out and gave himself up our hero looked at him and said:

"I told you that would be the way it would turn out. You see, I am one of the luckiest mortals that ever started in to bring down a gang of outlaws. I never make a miss of it."

The vigilantes quickly started for the judge with the prisoners, who were able to walk.

Those who were wounded were placed on the horses found in the retreat and taken there that way.

Arietta stood in the door of the shanty, which had been dubbed the court house by the miners, when the procession came up.

When she saw her dashing young lover she gave a cry of joy and ran to meet him.

"Three cheers fur ther jedge!" yelled Lige Booster, taking off his hat and waving it over his head.

Everybody joined in the cheer that went up, Wild included.

It was such a day as Seven Spot had never seen.

In spite of the lawless characters that had gathered there from all parts, the little camp had grown into what they called a town.

But now that law and order was to run the place things would be different, and there ought to be a big improvement in no time.

"Come, Et!" exclaimed Wild, as he escorted his pretty sweetheart into the shanty. "Get ready to try these prisoners. I am the principal witness against them."

"Judge," spoke up Dutton, "if you gave a man who tore down the proclamation twenty minutes to get out of the camp, you shouldn't allow them who was goin' to kill Young Wild West half as much time. I don't want you to think that I'm interferin', but I jest want to let you know how the men feel about it."

"All right," said Arietta. "Bring up the captain of the Oregon Outlaws first."

Doe Dean was led up, limping.

Wild charged him with having conspired to kill him and told what had happened in a few words.

Arietta seemed to carry the thing through.

"The sentence of the court is that you have got just three minutes to get out of town!" she said.

A howl of approval went up, much to the surprise of the "judge," for she expected that they would want to lynch the outlaw captain.

She did not stop to think that it would take a man crippled with a bullet longer than three minutes to get out of town.

She did not know that Doc Dean was hanged by a yelling crowd ten minutes later until it was all over.

And by that time she had given out the sentences for the rest of the prisoners.

They varied from five to ten minutes to get out of the town.

But right here we may as well say that Handy, the hunter, was the only one who did get out alive.

It was a very peaceful little Western town that the sun went down on that night.

Those of the miners who had not declared for the law and order league did so before they retired that night.

Gil Griddle was the last one of them all, and when he came he was very humble.

"I'm satisfied ter have a good government," he said, as he went away. "I reckon this are too good a place ter go ter ther dogs."

Our friends only remained in Seven Spot a couple of days after that.

Arietta had resigned her position as judge immediately after she had finished sentencing the outlaws.

"I did not mean that any of them should die," she said. "But I suppose I should have given them more time."

But everybody else was satisfied, so that settled it.

"Well," said Young Wild West, when they were ready to start from Seven Spot, "now we will make straight for Yuma. We have had enough of the Oregon Outlaws."

"Whoopee!" cried Cheyenne Charlie, waving a farewell to the friends they had made in the town.

"Hoolay!" piped Hop and Wing, the Chinamen.

THE END.

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